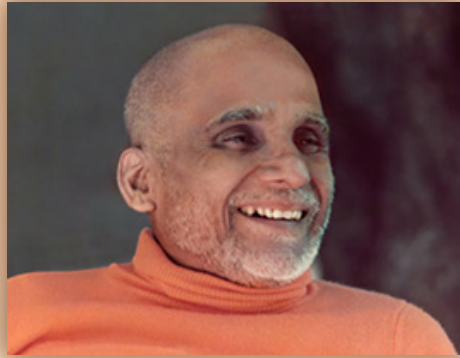
THE ESSENCE OF THE AITAREYA AND TAITTIRIYA UPANISHADS

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

Though this eBook edition is designed primarily for digital readers and computers, it works well for print too. Page size dimensions are 5.5" x 8.5", or half a regular size sheet, and can be printed for personal, non-commercial use: two pages to one side of a sheet by adjusting your printer settings.

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PREFACE

The lectures on the Aitareya and Taittiriya Upanishads were delivered by the author a few years back during the annual session of Sadhana Week at Headquarters. The theme of these discourses centres round the cosmological narrative of the Aitareya Upanishad and the psychological analysis of the Taittiriya Upanishad. The importance of this revealing subject would be amply clear to anyone who recognises the significance of the psychophysical structure of the human individual in relation to the universe or creation as a whole. Thus, this detailed study forms not merely an entertaining journey through the cosmos right from the point of its origin down to the lowest predicament of human nature in its sociological associations and involvements, but also an acute meditation on man's divine relevance to the Supreme Being.

This publication is intended to serve as a positive spiritual guide to all seekers the world over.

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I - INTRODUCTION

The great issues of life, whether personal or social, hinge upon the concept of duty—what one ought to do in life. We know very well that the whole enterprise of mankind is a struggle of duty towards a particular end, and it makes no difference what position a person occupies in life insofar as the broad question of duty is concerned. The division of duty may vary from person to person, or from condition to condition; but that there is a duty of some sort cannot be denied, because duty is another name for the function that one is expected to perform in a given location of one's life.

But what one ought to do cannot be decided easily unless another question is answered: what is it that one is aiming at? Our aim will decide to a large extent the nature of our expectations, whether in our individual capacity or in our capacity as units in human society. What is it that we seek, finally? If this is clear to the mind, evidently what one ought to do, also, would be clear. But, neither of these questions is easy to answer. And without properly conceiving the background of our efforts in life, we seem to be going headlong every day, right from morning till evening, taking for granted that everything is clear to our minds.

In fact, if there has been a proper clarity of thought in respect of one's duty and the aim of one's life, there would be no such thing as conflict in life. Conflict or disharmony arises in mankind due to the fact of missing the very purpose of life and, consequently, missing the knowledge of

the functions that one is supposed to perform in life. Often we hear people saying: "This is my duty; this not my duty." But, on what grounds does one make this statement? How do we know that this is our duty, or this is not our duty? Is it because we have been born in a particular family, our father has been performing this function, and, therefore, it is ours, or it is not ours? Or is there any other logical foundation for this concept of one's having this to do, or not to do?

We, generally, do not go deep into these matters. Mankind, unfortunately, is averse to go into the depths of any question. We like to float on the surface in every kind of activity of ours. Whatever be our walk of life, we seem to be content merely by glossing over things without going into the profundity of the issues on hand. But no problem is merely a surface issue; every problem is as wide as life itself. We can imagine how vast and how immense in magnitude human life is, and our concept of duty cannot be 'smaller' than that. There is something in us which is vitally connected with everyone else. But for this fact, there would not be an endeavour to talk in terms of mankind or humanity.

It is very strange that we speak of mankind, as if there is some sort of relationship between oneself and another in the group that we call humanity. The desire to form organisations, institutions, bodies, etc., whether in the small unit of a family or larger units like the nation or an international organisation—whatever be the concept of the body that we form—the hidden desire seems to be to form a harmonious whole out of the little ingredients we call

human individuals. This desire is enough to indicate that there is some purpose we are aiming at in life.

An organisation is a general term and it can apply to any kind of people coming together. If two people join and harmoniously work, it is an organisation. If it is more than two—it can be a thousand—it is still an organisation; and if the whole of humanity is taken as a single body, that too is an organisation. Whatever it is, the point is that we seem to be discontented by any form of isolated life that we may be compelled to live. An individual is not always happy by being absolutely cut off from human society. There is an instinct inborn in our nature to come together with other people; we call it a social instinct without understanding what it actually means.

An instinct is an intelligent seeking on our part for the purpose of the achievement of a goal. An instinct is not a blind and chaotic urge that arises in ourselves; it is a rational, purposive movement which is unintelligibly conducting itself towards a particular aim, and when we cannot understand the rational background of the instinct, we call it irrational. But if we can understand the purposive movement of the instinct, it becomes logical, and there would be then no distinction between these two. And why is it that we have an instinct for social life? Why do we wish to come together and form bodies, whether it is a religious body, or a social body, or a political body, whatever be that body?

We have some un-understandable and inscrutable feeling within us from a part of ourselves which speaks in its own language. There are depths in our personality which

are deeper than our conscious level, as we all know very well. This instinct for social collaboration does not necessarily arise from a conscious deliberative thinking of the human individual. It is automatic. We feel. Many people say: “I feel.” But this feeling arises not from the conscious level. It is not a logically deduced conclusion arrived at by induction or deduction. It is a feeling which has a reason of its own which transcends ordinary organisational thinking in logical terms.

We have an aim behind our coming together. This necessity to come together, to work together, implies that we seek a common purpose; otherwise, there would be no point in such a longing. If each individual flies at a tangent and there is absolutely no connection between the aim of myself and yourself, there would be absolutely no meaning in our joining together, coming together, meeting together or performing a work through a body or an organisation. It is taken for granted that every organisation of human society, of whatever nature, has an implication behind it—that there is a common purpose behind human individuals. Otherwise, people would not sit together or speak together in the same language.

Stretching this argument a little further, we are very fond of speaking in terms of ‘mankind’ these days—humanity. We would be happy if there were no wars, no battles, would be happy if there were no quarrels, and if there was a single government for the whole world. This is a great aspiration, no doubt; but how does this aspiration arise, unless the whole of mankind has a single purpose or aim before it? If every individual is differentiated from

every other, there cannot be such an aspiration at all. That we seek such a possibility, whether it is immediately practicable or not, is itself an indication of what humanity is basically made of. It is substantially one. But for the fact of this substantial unity of the building blocks of mankind, there would be no such thing as talk of universal government, etc. Even this idea will not arise in one's mind. We know that the effect cannot contain what is not in the cause. The idea of universal government, or a single mankind, and human solidarity, etc., which arises as a kind of effect, a psychological product, from our minds has a cause behind it. If we are logical thinkers, we would naturally accept that there cannot be an effect without a cause. The very functioning of the human mind in terms of universal collaboration and achievement is an indication that it is based on some cause which is characterised by similar purposes.

So, our concept of duty in life is naturally dependent on the aim that we have before ourselves, and, as was explained, the final aim of mankind does not seem to be segregated internally, a fact that comes to high relief on account of our basic aspirations. We feel happy if we see our own brothers. There is a feeling between man and man. It is a common feeling, no doubt, arising on account of kinship of character, sympathy of feeling, and unity of purpose. If this had not been there, there would be no such thing psychologically as mankind or humanity.

If the aim seems to be an organisational unity—a thing that automatically comes out as a consequence of our ways of thinking—our duties also cannot be of a dissimilar

character. If there is a purposive collaboration of the aims of life among mankind tending towards an organic perfection in itself, there cannot be different sets of ideals or duties before mankind, because duties or functions are nothing but activities directed towards the achievement of the purpose of humanity. The duties are as much related one to the other as the segments of the different aspirations of individuals are in respect of the total purpose of mankind.

As there cannot be an effect without a cause, a cause is logically implied behind the manifestation of an effect. This effect that we are speaking of today seems to be so large that the cause should be at least as large as itself. We have a single humanitarian psychology before us—man's mind working in its generality. It is not my mind or your mind that is working, but the mind of mankind as a whole aiming at human perfection, mankind's solidarity, and a peaceful existence. This is the way in which the total mind of mankind works, as an effect of a cause which is prior, naturally, to this effect of the total thinking of mankind.

We may have a doubt in our minds as to whether it is true that we all think alike. Surely, we are not always thinking alike. Each individual has a world under his own hat, as they say, but this is only an apparent diversity that we see. When we are brought deep into the levels of our basic aspirations and likes, we will realise that these differences vanish. I'll give you a concrete example. You are a patriot and lover of your nation, and there are millions of people inhabiting a nation, forming a nation, with each individual having his own or her own ideas, whims and

fancies, ideals and ideologies. Suppose a war breaks out and the whole nation is threatened by a disastrous situation. One can imagine how all the individuals join together, gird up their loins, and aim at a single purpose. The isolated whims and fancies disappear at once.

This can be very easily proved by a little bit of deep thinking. When a common purpose is before us, the individual idiosyncrasies recede to the background. The individual whims come to the forefront only when the basic security is granted, not otherwise. If our life itself is going to be threatened, if the whole mankind is to be visited by a catastrophe, one can see how mankind joins together to avert this possibility. There would be no man-woman distinction, there would be no distinction of east, west, north, south, black, white, etc. People would, then, all stand up vigilant, wakeful to face this threat that is endangering mankind as a whole. This has been seen through the course of history, and we can see it at any time under similar conditions. We seem to be isolated only when the basic necessities are supplied to us, not otherwise. If the basic roots are shaken, then our different ideologies on the surface vanish altogether. All this is a little bit of thinking along logical lines for the purpose of coming to a conclusion as to the duties of mankind based on the aims or purposes of life.

Unless there is some kind of a connecting link lying at the background of human thought, the mind would not function in this manner. There cannot be any such thing as international thinking, unless there is a foundation for such a possibility. We know very well that diversities imply a

kind of unity. Even two minds cannot communicate with each other unless there is a corresponding medium between the two minds. If one mind is absolutely cut off from another mind due to totally dissimilar characters, the one cannot communicate with the other. There would be no congress between one person and another person.

But we communicate our thoughts; we speak language which can be transmitted to another; we understand each other. The fact that we are able to know one another implies that we can psychologically come together. This, again, implies secondarily that this understanding or thinking or communication of thought between one and the other is an external indication of a basic unity between the two persons. There would be no such thing as the concept of two unless there is the concept of the one already behind them. One cannot imagine that there are two things unless one is able to synthesise these two things in one's consciousness. So, carrying this deduction to the larger dimension of humanity, or mankind as a whole, we seem to be floating on the ocean of a single Mind—the Mind of mankind, the total Mind of humanity, of which the individual minds are, as it were, drops. This Total Mind seems to be urging us forward for the realisation of a purpose.

With this introduction, we may now turn to the message of some of the Upanishads, the great legacy not merely of this country but of mankind as a whole, one should say. The Upanishads are the record of the experiences of superhuman thinkers, those who had risen above the level of ordinary mankind and beyond the

limitations of sensory knowledge. It is the Upanishads that will guide us in answering these questions which we raised at the beginning. We cannot independently walk with the strength of our own legs in this arduous task of solving universal questions.

The Upanishads, among which we are to take up here one or two for the purpose of the analysis of the subject, are documents left by people who, by the power of their meditations, soared above the ordinary level of human thinking. They could plumb the depths of this Total Mind, to which we made reference just now. For us, the Total Mind of mankind is only a theory; it is a logically deduced, abstract something. We are inferring that there should be a Total Mind on the grounds that mankind seems to be moving towards the realisation of a common purpose.

But these masters were not merely theoreticians. They were those who thought in terms of that single Mind only. As I think through my mind, you think through your mind and each one thinks through one's mind, these masters were able to think through this Total Mind, so that their thoughts were not individual thoughts; they were thoughts of all people blended together into an amalgam of completeness. These are the Upanishads.

The reason why we feel like taking the aid of these thoughts of the Upanishadic masters in answering our questions is that they have gone to the very roots of the cause of all causes of these effects manifested as this world, this society, mankind, the efforts of mankind, etc. We speak of human life, human duties and human purposes and so on, without properly paying sufficient heed to the

conditioning factors that underlie these phenomena behind mankind. Our minds work in a particular fashion, being conditioned by certain factors.

Now, we gradually move to a philosophical realm from the ordinary social and empirical level of thought on which we have been traversing up to this time. Philosophy is a study of causes, rather ultimate causes, and an explanation of everything in terms of these causes. Sometimes they call it metaphysical thinking. Whatever be the name we give to it, it is the study of ultimate causes and an explanation of everything through these.

The ultimate causes should be such that there should not be causes behind these causes; else they would not be the ultimate causes. The meaning of an ultimate cause is that it stands by its own right, and it does not need an explanation or a cause precedent to it or prior to it. If every cause has a cause behind it, naturally there should be a final cause which is an explanation of every other cause. Otherwise, we would land in an infinite regress of causes behind causes without coming to any decision whatsoever. But we know very well that our minds are averse to any kind of infinite regress. We strive for a final conclusion.

But, this would not be possible unless there is an ultimate cause of causes, the causeless cause. This causeless cause we call the final cause. The ultimate cause should be capable of containing in itself every effect. And before we try to understand the nature of this cause which is ultimate, we also have to understand the effects which are contained in the cause. The effects are what we are capable of thinking about anything which we confront in our life.

The whole objective universe is the effect. Why do we call it an effect? Because the universe has a tendency to move forward through the process of evolution. We would never see one atom in this world lying static without movement. There is a motion of everything towards something of which there is no proper idea at the present moment. Rivers are flowing, the sun and the moon and the stars are active, and we are more active; the whole world is busy with doing something. The astronomical universe and the subatomic world are active, moving vibrantly. All seem to be ever engaged for some purpose which they have not yet fulfilled. If the purpose had been fulfilled, there would be no activity afterwards. The very fact that everything in nature seems to be busily doing something is an indication that it is aiming at a purpose. This is the characteristic of an effect. An effect is that which is aiming at its own transcendental nature. There is an effort on the part of everyone to transcend oneself, to rise in dimension, to become better quantitatively and qualitatively. This is what they call the urge of evolution, whether it is physical evolution, biological evolution or psychological evolution.

So, from this point of view, one can very easily conclude that the whole universe is in the position of an effect, and is not the ultimate cause. For, if it had been an ultimate cause, there would have been no tendency to move or transcend; there would not be such a thing as an urge to move forward, to outgrow itself. Everything in the world seems to have a tendency to outgrow itself, to become more and grow larger. That is why it is said that the universe is an effect, and not a cause. It turns towards the cause, and its

activities cease on the realisation of the final cause, the purpose of existence.

The universe is moving towards the realisation of its purpose. This is cosmic evolution, which takes place through different manifestations. The lowest level of it is physical, the stage of material evolution. The higher is the biological evolution or growth, to become inwardly subtler, a tendency to psychological growth. This is mental evolution, intellectual ascent and so on. The whole world conceived of in any of its levels seems to be restlessly moving forward for the realisation of its one purpose. What this purpose is, is the subject of the Upanishads.

Two of the important Upanishads are the Aitareya and the Taittiriya, which are related to each other in a way, and coextensive in content—the one emphasising one aspect of the matter, and the other a coordinated theme. The Aitareya and the Taittiriya Upanishads speak of the same theme, but from two different points of view.

They try to answer the question of life by reference to causes. This is a very proper attitude, no doubt. We know very well that every question, when it is attempted to be answered, brings us to its causative factors. Why is there a disease? Why is a person sick? We ask questions of this kind. In reply, we try to find out the present cause of the situation. If one is sick, we must find out the reason behind the sickness. If there is a war, we must find out the cause behind the war. If there is some kind of discrepancy, we have to know the cause behind it. If there is any kind of tension, we argue out why this kind of tension has arisen. Unless we find out the cause of a particular circumstance,

we cannot probe into the context of its circumstance, whether it is a physical, social, biological or medical one. This is a philosophical attitude we are adopting towards everything in life. There is no one who is not a philosopher, in the sense that everyone wants to know the cause of particular effects. This is the philosophical trend of thinking.

The great masters of the Upanishads moved from the lower causes to the higher ones, until they were able to grasp the final cause of things, and they gave out their conclusions, the final truth for mankind. The ills of mankind are effects in their nature, and they become causes of other illnesses to which we are heir. By the process of deep yoga and meditation in which the masters of yore engaged themselves, plumbing the depths of reality, the ultimate cause and the truths of life were unravelled. These experiences are recorded in the Upanishads.

The way in which we can encounter anything is twofold: inductive and deductive. Students of logical intelligence move from particulars to generals, which is inductive reasoning. If it is a movement from the general to the particular, we call it deduction. Both ways are permissible according to the nature of the case. Every day the sun rises in the east. We are seeing the sun rising in the east for days, months and years. We collect the particular instances of the sun rising in the east every day. Then we make a general conclusion: we say the sun always rises in the east.

But there is a flaw in inductive reasoning. Our conclusions may not be correct. The sun may have been

rising in the east for thousands of years, but why should we conclude that the sun shall rise only in the east in the future also? It need not be a valid conclusion, because the sun is not bound by our conclusions. It can change its position for some reason or the other. Some law may operate differently, and tomorrow the sun may rise in the west. Induction is not valid as an ultimate form of reasoning. Going from the particular to the general may be a practically useful way of thinking, as far as things go, but it is not ultimately reliable.

Deductive reasoning is the other way round; it is argument from the general to the particular. For example, 'all men are mortal' is the theory. We know very well that everyone dies. Socrates is a man. Therefore, Socrates is mortal by nature. This is the way of argument from the general to the particular. From the general concept of all humanity being mortal, we come to the conclusion that Socrates must also be mortal, since he is also a man. This is to give an idea of inductive reasoning and deductive reasoning. Philosophy is mostly inductive, especially from the point of Western thought. Western philosophers are very much inclined to the inductive way of thinking. They cannot suddenly jump to generals, inasmuch as there are great controversies concerning the nature of the universal. We are not going to enter into this subject now. Our purpose is different.

The masters of the Upanishads had a direct experience; and from this experience which is of the general, they drew conclusions on particular consequences in a deductive fashion. When we study the Aitareya and the Taittiriya

Upanishads, we will find that both of them adopted the deductive process of reasoning. The thought is deductive in the sense that the ultimate conclusion has already been given to us. The nature of the cause need not be investigated by the sweat of one's brow through inductive reasoning. We can try that method also, of course; but, for the present moment, it is not necessary. The Upanishads come to the conclusion of an ultimate generality. This declaration pertains to eternal verities: to the ultimate nature of reality, the cause of all causes. The ultimate cause is the determining factor in the effects. The whole of this world, this universe, is the effect of the ultimate cause, Brahman.

We have already noticed that the ultimate cause cannot have another cause behind it; if that was the case, it cannot be regarded as the ultimate cause; it would then be an effect of another cause altogether. There cannot be two ultimate causes; else there would arise the difficulty of understanding the relationship between the two causes. We cannot come to any conclusion without a definite notion of relation. The concept of relation is the most difficult thing to imagine in the mind. We cannot understand how one thing is related to another thing. The very fact of our ability to communicate our thoughts among ourselves is an indication of there being one Mind behind ourselves. Otherwise, there would not be such thing as communication at all. Likewise, the imagination of two ultimate causes would imply that there is something connecting these two causes, transcendent to these two causes, which will become the ultimate cause. So, somehow

or the other, the ultimate cause cannot be more than one, and there cannot be another cause behind it.

Now we have an idea of what an ultimate cause can be. There cannot be something behind it, something prior to it, something larger than it or greater than it; and there cannot be something equal to it. Such is the unique character of the Ultimate Reality. This is the Cause. We call it Reality, because we cannot see anything further than itself. It has no purpose beyond itself. Everything proceeds from that. It does not have anything beyond it to move to. The Ultimate Cause and the Ultimate Reality mean one and the same thing. This existed, this exists and this shall exist always. There cannot be anything more than this. Here earthly bondage ceases.

II - THE ATMAN

This final substance is constituted of the essence of everything, and it is our very Self. It is called the Atman. It is the Atman because it is the root substance of all things which are in the position of an effect. The Atman is the substance of everyone and everything. It is the Total Substance of all created beings, and so it is called Brahman. The Total Substance is Brahman, and the same thing conceived as the essence of particular beings is known as the Atman. Even as there cannot be a cause behind the final cause, there cannot be an Atman behind the Atman, for the very basic substance is what is called the Atman. The substance should be ultimate, and the Atman is such. The ultimate in us is the Atman. The ultimate in the cosmos is Brahman. There cannot be anything other than this Universal Reality.

The Aitareya Upanishad proclaims that the Atman, in the beginning, was the all; and it has become all this universe. The concept of the universe is also a difficult thing to entertain in the mind unless we analyse the universe into its very components. The universe is manifested out of this Total Substance, Brahman, which is the Atman, or the Self, of the universe. So the total effect came out of the Total Cause. From Brahman came the universe.

Now, something coming from something else is also a difficult thing to understand. What is the procedure of the world coming out of the Ultimate Cause? What is the relationship between the effect and the cause here? There cannot, in fact, be a vital distinction between the effect and

the cause. Our aspirations would be meaningless, the search for reality would be baseless, and there would be no function of thought as self-transcendence if we were not vitally connected with the cause. Every activity in the world is the effect moving towards the cause by various degrees of self-transcendence. The very presence of the moral urge to overstep ourselves to a higher cause or purpose is a proof of the fact that there is a living contact of the cause with its effect.

While the effect has come from the cause, it is not disconnected from the cause. This is one principle laid down at the very beginning itself. The universe seems to have descended in such a way that it has not isolated itself from the Absolute vitally. There is no vital disconnection between the effect and the cause. There is some sort of a relation always. There is an inscrutable relationship, '*anirvachaniya sambandha*', between the effect and the cause. There is not an absolute identity, because there is a manifestation. It is not an absolute manifestation, because we can see our relationship with the cause. This relationship between God and man, the Creator and the universe, the Absolute and the relative, is unintelligible. This relationship is the beginning of all cosmological questions, the theories of creation and doctrines of every kind. Once creation is admitted as a fact of empirical experience, everything that devolves from it is also accepted. We are only to accept the fact of the creation of the universe, and we are made at once to accept everything else also, automatically. There is a gradual evolution by an

increase in the density of manifestation at lower levels. The Absolute never loses hold of the universe.

The Atman alone was. "*Atma va idam eka evagra asit, nanyat kin cana misat*," says the Aitareya Upanishad at the very commencement. The Atman existed as the unparalleled Being, and it became the cause of the manifested elements. We have the great division of the elements as ether, air, fire, water and earth, in all their densities or levels of expression. There is a causal condition, a subtle condition and a gross condition. This was manifested. But the Absolute is never disconnected from them at any time; it always maintains a lien over everything that it has created. It enters the great objects of a cosmical nature, and this is what we call the immanence of God.

The Creator does not stand as an extra-cosmic substance unrelated to its creation. The Upanishad rules out totally any coming of a fresh effect from the cause. The immanence of the cause in the effect is admitted. It is the immanence of the cause in the effect that creates an aspiration in us for higher values. When we ask for God, it is God speaking from within. The cause is speaking to itself from the bottom of the effect when there is an aspiration on the part of the effect to move towards the cause. This circumstance of the cause being hiddenly present in every effect is called the immanence of the cause in the effect. Then we say that God is present in the world.

The Creator is not outside the cosmos. He is not fashioning the world as a potter makes a pot or a carpenter makes a table. It is not like that. He is one with the substance of things in immanence, as clay is present in the

pot out of which the pot is manufactured, or as wood is present in the table out of which it is made. So we cannot be isolated from the substance of the cause.

Thus, there was an entry of the cosmic substance into this cosmic effect. This is the first act of God—the entry of the Absolute into the relative in its universal fashion. He became the cosmic man, to speak in ordinary terms—the Maha Purusha or Purushottama. The Absolute, unrelated to the created universe, became the cosmic determining factor of the universe. This is the Great Being spoken of in the Purusha Sukta and the Satarudriya of the Veda, and the various scriptures which speak of the all-pervading or omnipresent character of God. We always speak of the omnipresent nature of God, by which we mean the cause is hidden in the effect—immanently present, and not isolated from the effect.

Now, this is a very grand concept the Upanishads are placing before us in connection with the process of the creation of the universe, and we are very happy to hear all these truths. But, we are also unhappy today; this, also, we cannot forget. Why has this sudden unhappiness come out of this great happiness of God's creation? When we hear all these great statements of cosmic manifestation, we feel elated; but we have little sorrows in our homes, and when we get out of the hall, we have to scratch our heads with our own problems. What has happened to us? How has this grief come into our hearts out of this great cosmic manifestation of God's entering into this universal effect? This also will be told to us by the Upanishad itself.

There was a very dramatic action of God, as it were—a real drama He enacted before Himself, because there was no audience before Him. He was the director, He was the *dramatis personae*, and He was the audience. It is very strange! He immediately visualised Himself as the all: "*Aham idam sarvam asmi*"—I am this all. This universe of manifested effects is myself—naturally, because the whole effect is constituted of the substance of this ultimate cause. "I am this all." It is as if the clay is telling, "I am all the pots"; the wood is telling, "I am all the tables, I am all the chairs, I am all the furniture." Quite true, and it is very interesting indeed! Every effect that has come out of a single cause is that cause only. So the cause is affirming itself in every effect: "I am this all."

But we are to enter the vale of tears after some time due to a catastrophic effect that seems to have followed from this dramatic manifestation of God. Nobody can say what has happened. We are completely screened away from this mystery. There is an iron curtain between ourselves and this mystery that has taken place. We are told not to speak about those things. The mind is repelled from the very thought of investigation into the mystery behind this event or happening. We are simply exiled for no fault of our own, as it were. We cannot even ask, "Why?" We cannot know whether it is because of the will of God that we have been exiled in this manner, or due to a fault of ours.

In certain forms of administration the subjects cannot question as to how a thing has happened, because they are subjected to the law of that administration. So, there is a peculiar universal government of God operating in a

despotic manner, as it were, which insists upon its own language being spoken by everyone, and insists also on its law being obeyed in the manner it is expected. There is a sudden dropping of the curtain in this great scene of cosmic drama that is being played before us, and we do not see what is behind the screen. Now the screen has fallen. The many, which the One has become, are there, no doubt; the pots which have come out of clay are there; the effects are there. But one thing is not there, and that is the beginning of our sorrows.

When we say that the Atman alone is, we assert the One alone, to the exclusion of the many; and when we speak of the One becoming the many, we are conscious of the One and the many at the same time. Then comes the level of thinking where we are aware only of the many, and not the One. That is the dividing wall between the One and the many. The original drama was an envisagement of the many by the One. That is the grand creation. But when the curtain falls, the One is cut off from the many; or rather, the concept or the consciousness of the One is isolated from the consciousness of the many. Then there is what we call the manifestation of diversity in a literal sense. Then comes the necessity for one individual to cognise or to perceive the presence of another individual.

But, before this took place, the original Cause has taken care to see that it does not lose control over this manifestation completely. This is another aspect of the beauty of the drama. It has maintained its multiplicity with the background of the unity of its own Atmanhood or Selfhood, so that there was a peculiar intermediary

condition where the multiplicity of the manifestation was the content of the total awareness of a single being, the Universal Atman that it was. And the Aitareya Upanishad tells us that the mouth burst open, speech came out, and out of it Agni, the deity, came. The eyes came out, sight manifested itself out of it, and Aditya or the sun came—and so on in respect of the various functions.

The beauty of this manifestation is a fact which we should never forget when we go further: the function comes first, and the deity comes afterwards. There is the mind first, thought afterwards, and the moon subsequently. The eye is first, seeing comes afterwards, and the sun still afterwards. The guardians or the deities of the various functions in their cosmical setup are subsidiary to the Ultimate Cause, which is the one Atman. They are not the controlling elements, as is the case with ourselves.

The universe was an effect of the Atman. It does not stand in the position of a cause, outside us, stimulating our senses to activity, as it happens to us today. The presence of an object stimulates our senses and the mind, and then we become conscious of the object. Then we establish a relationship with the world outside. The world is first, and we come afterwards here in this individual, empirical state. But there, it was not like that. The world was subsequent; and here, we become the consequents.

Now, this is a very crucial point where we have to very carefully draw a distinction between the cosmic level and the individual level, because the extent of our understanding of this mystery of the distinction between the cosmic and the individual will also be the extent to

which we will be able to understand what life is, what duty is, and what the aim of mankind is.

III - ISVARA AND JIVA

The great cause of all causes, the Supreme Being, projected this universe, and Itself arose out of the universe, as it were, in a character of immanence, not losing the transcendence of its own essential being. And all the functions that we see in our own selves, *jivas* or individuals that we are, were present there in their original form. But the seeds of the manifestation of diversity were also sown in the body of this Cosmic Being. There is a great difference between the original and the reflected parts that we are.

Thus it is mentioned in the Upanishad that the causative factors of all the functions were projected first. These are what are usually known as the *adhidaivas* or the superintending divinities, the gods of religion, the various Devatas, the supreme celestials. They began to twinkle forth in the body of this universal manifested Being. So the *adhidaiva* is nothing but the Supreme Being Himself appearing in part or essence as the controlling principle behind all functions in the universe.

This is the point of a sudden transformation taking place in many quarters of creation. We cannot actually have an idea as to what are the various transformations that took place. The entire constitution of the government of the universe was laid down at one stroke: "*Yathatathyatah arthan vyadadhat sasvatibhyah samabhyah.*" It is a nonamendable constitution. It cannot be meddled with or interfered with; it does not stand in need of any kind of change in the process of time. Such an eternal setup of administration of the whole cosmos was contemplated and laid down.

The basic principles of human experience also were laid down and made manifest in the form of the subjective experiencers, called *jivas*, and the objective world, known as the *adhibhuta-prapancha*. The individual may be called the *adhyatma* and the external world is the *adhibhuta*. The *adhidaiva* has already been mentioned as the controlling divinities. But all this does not happen at once. There is a gradational procedure followed. From the Cosmic-conscious Being, who as a total of the entire divinity rose up from the manifested universe, there was the multiplicity of divinities, the *adhidaivas*.

As mentioned towards the conclusion of the previous chapter, there was a drop of the curtain, as it were, and a sudden unexpected and unpalatable change or transformation took place by which the divinities begin to assert a sort of independence. This is the beginning of individuality. As Plato said, "Marriages always take place in the heavens first. They manifest themselves on earth afterwards." Likewise, this can be said in regard to everything. Even wars take place in the heavens first; they reveal themselves on earth afterwards. Every function takes place in the heavens first—which means to say the *adhidaivas* contemplate the possibility of every action in the beginning, and these are manifested gradually into the *adhibhuta-prapancha*, and felt and experienced by the *adhyatma*, the *jiva*.

So there was a split of a universal character, as if every drop in the ocean began to feel its own independence. This is a very good example, because the drops in the ocean are not qualitatively different from the ocean. And it appears

that, at least at the very outset, there was no qualitative distinction of the individual divinities from the total of the Universal Being. This isolation of particulars was, therefore, in *consciousness*. We have to underline this word because a real split is not possible; it was not an actual bifurcation, but a consciousness of one's having been bifurcated, separated, segregated from the Whole.

To give an illustration, it is perhaps exactly as one would experience in dream. There is a split of consciousness into the knowing subject and the world of experience; but the split has not taken place. If it had really taken place, we would not wake up into the integrity of our mind. But nevertheless, there is an experience of such a transformation, change and division having taken place.

The first consequence of this division is, as the Upanishad puts it, an intense hunger and thirst. Well, this is a very beautiful word, implying much more than what our usual hunger and thirst would connote. The hunger and thirst of the divinities who wrenched themselves, as it were, from the total of the Universal can be called, in the language of our modern philosophers, the constitutional appetition of the individual. It is not merely the stomach asking for food or the throat asking for water; it is the entire setup of individuality craving for experience in an objective manner. They craved for objective immortality, a thing that they had lost on account of their isolation from the Whole. They became mortal. Mortality is the consciousness of the isolation of the part from the Whole; and then every disease crops up at once.

Hunger and thirst visited these divinities who were cast into this restless ocean of experience objectively, which is what we call this *samsara* or the world, the universe. But how could this hunger be satisfied? The hunger and the thirst, or the appetition of the individual for satisfaction, can be satisfied only through a medium of experience. There must be a body; there must be a food to appease this hunger. Where is this food and where is the vehicle? Where is the body in which these divinities are to ride and to have their experience of the satisfaction of their hunger and thirst?

The whole Upanishad is very symbolic and metaphorical in explaining a highly spiritual experience. The divinities were archetypal, superphysical essences. These are the deities. They are not physical bodies like ours, and there was no food for them to satisfy their hunger of the appetition for contact. What were they to contact? So, they asked for an abode: "Give us a body. Give us a vehicle. We want a house to stay in."

Now the metaphor continues. The Great Being projected a bull before them and said, "Here is the abode for you. This is the body for you. You enter this body and satisfy your hunger and your thirst." The divinities looked at the bull and said, "This is not suitable. This is not a proper abode for us." Then He projected a horse. They looked at the body of the horse and concluded that the horse, too, was not a proper body for real satisfaction. Then He projected a human body. "This is correct," they said. "We want this body only," and they entered it.

The Aitareya Upanishad is very precise. It does not go into long details of the evolutionary process of the individual body. But certain other Upanishads, such as the Maitrayani for instance, give us hints of there having been a gradual ascent, or we may call it a descent from another point of view, of the consciousness of these individual divinities from one category of experience to another category. We may call it, in the language of our evolutionary doctrines, the rise from the abode of inorganic matter to the abode of the vegetable kingdom, then further up to the abode of the animal world, and finally to the human level. Then we find ourselves in the state in which we are.

The divinities entered every body and rejected the earlier ones on account of not finding adequate facilities for the satisfaction of their appetitions through those bodies. Even if we have a desire, there must be a proper instrument to fulfil that desire. If the instrument is defective, the desire cannot be fulfilled. So they wanted a perfected embodiment or tool for the satisfaction of their appetition—the hunger and the thirst, as the Upanishad puts it. And the human body, which is superior to the lower categories of manifestation of the mineral, the vegetable and the animal, was considered by them as the fittest instrument, and the Great Being ordered them to enter this body. "This is your house. Live in this house. This is your vehicle, and now you do whatever you like through this." They entered. How did they enter?

Here is the peculiar characteristic of the individual explained in contradistinction with the original status of

the divinities in the body of the Cosmic Being. The Upanishad mentions that when the divinities were originally projected from the body of the Cosmic Being, there was first the location of the function, for instance, the mouth; then there was the urge of the expression of that location in the form of speech; and then the divinity Agni, the presiding deity over speech, manifested itself—and so on with every other function.

Thus, the god or the divinity came afterwards; the function came first, so that the controlling principle of even the divinities was co-extensive with the existence of the Universal Being Himself. The gods were not independent, but were dependent on the Total from which they were projected. The gods were not the controllers; rather, they were controlled by the forces that worked integrally behind them, which arose from the total being of the Universal Virat.

But now, what has happened is that when the divinities entered the human body, there was a reversal of the whole process. The human functions correspond to the universal functions in the same way as the functions in a reflected image correspond to the functions in the original that is reflected. Or, to give another example, when we look at our face in a mirror, there is a reflection of the face seen in that mirror, but there is a reversal of parts taking place—the right looks left and the left looks right. Also, if we stand on the bank of a river and see our reflection, we will find the head as the lowermost position in the reflection, though it is the topmost in us, the original.

Some such distorted reversal of processes took place when the divinities entered the body of the individual; instead of the mouth projecting the speech and then the Agni, or the Devata coming thereafter, Agni entered into the body as speech and found the mouth as the abode. So Agni is the controller here, and we are dependent. We are the effects. The effect in the universal status becomes the cause in the individual realm. So the *jiva* is different from Isvara in this manner, though it has come from Isvara only. It is a tremendous difference, notwithstanding the identity of essence, because of the same divinities operating there as well as here.

When this individual experience takes place in the body of the human personality on account of the entry of these divinities in the manner mentioned, something else also happens. There is immediately a grabbing attitude of the individual in respect of the food that is necessary for the satisfaction of the appetite. The food also was created in the form of this objective universe, and it has to be grasped by the senses.

The particular function in the human individual especially by which food is grasped and assimilated is the *apana*. The food that we throw into the alimentary canal is digested and absorbed by the *apana vayu* in our system; the organs cannot have this kind of experience. For example, by speaking about food we cannot be satisfied; by seeing food we will not be satisfied; by hearing about food we will not be satisfied; only by absorbing it through the *apana* through the alimentary system can we be satisfied.

This again is symbolic of every kind of food that the senses require. They have a desire to contact objects merely for the sake of maintaining their original status. It is a very artificial way, no doubt, that they are inventing, but they have no other alternative. The object of the senses is the medium through which the appetite of the individual is satisfied. This is something very strange, if we go very deep into the matter. This appetite is nothing but the hunger of the self to come in union with the Universal, from which it has been isolated. This point cannot be forgotten in the whole process of our studies.

We are not hungry in the ordinary sense. Any amount of food that we eat, whatever may be the diet that we take, cannot satisfy us because our real requirement is not this food. It is not the *khichadi*, the *dal*, the *chapatti*, the *puri* or the *laddu* that can satisfy us. But it appears as if this is what we require. It is not any kind of drink that we are actually in need of. Something else is the need; and that need is very deep. It is like the very deep-rooted chronic illness of which we have no knowledge on the superficial surface.

We are not asking for any kind of contact, really speaking. We are thoroughly mistaken, and that mistake itself is lost sight of completely. This complete oblivion of the very reason behind this hunger is called *avidya*. These terms do not occur in the Upanishad. I am explaining from the terminologies of the later philosophies.

Ignorance precedes every kind of action in the direction of the possession of the requirements of the senses. We run after things on account of an ignorance, which covers our consciousness, of the reason behind the very existence of

this hunger. There is only one need that we have, and not more than one—the need to become one with That from which we have been separated, and out of which we have been thrown. That is all. The divinities within are hungering. It is not the tongue or the ear or the nose that asks for things; it is the divinities within that are hungry. Indra, Varuna, Surya, etc., are the deities which are superintending over every part of our body. They are the rulers, they are the masters, they are the actual occupants of this habitat called this body. They ask for a reunion and a rehabilitation with the status they have lost. This hunger for reunion with the Universal manifests itself in a diversified form through the senses as desire to see, desire to hear, desire to taste, desire to touch, and so on. Hence, these are artificially created tentative satisfactions, because no other satisfaction is available. When everything has gone, whatever is available satisfies us.

The senses are thus duping us in this way by making us think that our need is something different from what it really is. What the child cries for is something, and what we give it is something else. It may be having an acute stomach ache, but we give it a sugar candy. We say, "Take this sugar candy. Don't weep." We do not know why the child is weeping. It has some ailment. It cannot express itself, poor thing! It has some deep-rooted agony which it is not able to speak out in its own language. But we are trying to pacify it, pamper it by things which are actually not what it needs. So is the case with the hunger or the thirst of the soul.

The word 'soul' is very important in this context. Here the soul means the *jiva*, or the individualised divinity. It has

been satisfied with this body. "Enter this abode," said the great Lord, and the *jivas* entered this abode of the human being. This abode has become a source of inadequate satisfaction, unfortunately, even though they thought that the human body is the best of all the productions. They did not want the earlier ones— the horse, the bull, etc.

But the human individuality also is found inadequate to the purpose because of the fact that it is conditioned by the five sense organs and the mind, which works in terms of the activities of the senses. The restless activities of the senses for contact with objects throughout the day, in all the walks of life, are for the appeasement of the hunger of the soul. Whatever work we do in this world, whatever status we are occupying is for the satisfaction of the appetite of this soul which is asking for a union with that which it has lost. But we fail miserably in this attempt because our activities in life are not a remedy for the trouble in which we are at present. We seem to be satisfied only because we have not understood what our problems are. We are totally ignorant of our actual situation.

The senses are tired of these activities. They get exhausted. How long can we go on grabbing things? We can do it for one day, one month, one year, ten years; but throughout our life we cannot engage ourselves in this activity. It is futile, ultimately. It is futile because it does not satisfy us. We eat today, tomorrow also we eat, and every day we eat; but we cannot be satisfied, and the appeasement of the hunger does not take place. Not only that, any amount of getting will not satisfy a person. Whatever be the possession that we have, it will not satisfy us. It does not

satisfy us because it is not what we want. Our need is one thing, and we are getting something else through the sense organs. So there is natural fatigue.

The wearing out of the senses, the exhaustion of the mind and the tiresomeness of the whole physical system bring about certain conditions. There are what are called the *avasthas*—the *jagrat*, *svapna* and *sushupti* states. We are sunk into the cycle of waking, dreaming and sleeping due to a complex of psychophysical activity taking place on account of our weddedness to the activities of the senses.

When the divinities entered the body, perhaps they did not enter the physical body first. It must have been the astral body, though this is not very clearly stated in the Upanishad, because there is a gradual hardening of the individuality through the causal and the subtle states into the physical state. The physical one is the grossest manifestation and the most exteriorised form of the appetition of the individual. It is here, in this physical condition in which we are, that we are in the worst of conditions because we are completely isolated, cut off from things, as it is clear to every one of us. In the subtle condition, at least there is an apparent feeling of affinity of one for the other. But in the so-called waking condition of physicality, there is a complete isolation; you have nothing to do with me, and I have nothing to do with you. This is the present state of affairs.

So on account of this situation and the fatigue that comes as a consequence thereof, there is the cycle of *jagrat*, *svapna* and *sushupti* experience. And there is a struggle again. This struggle is the battle of life. We are striving hard

by one means or the other to get out of this cycle of transmigratory existence, which comes automatically as a result of the impossibility of satisfying desires in the life of one particular body. The body that is given to us, the human body for instance, is inadequate because it cannot last eternally. As it is made up of physical components, naturally it will disintegrate when the time for it comes. The disintegration of the bodily individuality takes place when the forces of the appetite of the individual which gave rise to the manifestation of the body cease and withdraw their momentum. Then the body dies. But the momentum of desire does not cease. It seeks satisfaction once again in some other direction, in some other corner of creation. So there is rebirth, and the whole process continues once again. There is again dissatisfaction, birth and death, etc.; the *samsara-chakra* continues.

All this entire drama is beautifully explained in one verse of the Panchadasi by the author Sage Vidyaranya, where he says that from the time of the original will of the Universal to become the many, up to the entry of the Universal into the individual, it is the work of God; it is Isvara-srishti, as we call it. But from the time of the assertion of individuality by the *jiva* in the waking condition, through the physical system, etc., until there is liberation from this mortal experience—all this is Jiva-srishti. The entry into the body, consciousness of there being an individuality, the affirmation of it, the desires expressed through the senses, the sufferings coming as a consequence thereof, and the ultimate liberation from this

so-called bondage—all these are experiences of the *jiva*; they are not connected with Isvara.

This, in essence, is the story of the creation given in the Aitareya Upanishad. It asserts at the same time that in spite of all this manifestation, this diversity, variety, subtlety, physicality, etc., He is still the same One Absolute Universal. He has not become something else. This is a very great solacing message to us. If we had been really thrown out from the Garden of Eden and exiled forever as captives thrown into prison, then there would be no hope of liberation, or *moksha*. What has happened is something else altogether. It is not an actually historical occurrence that has taken place once upon a time. It is not that God was angry with us and drove us out of the Garden. What has happened is that there has been a twist of consciousness. There has been a malady of the mind, and it has to be treated as we treat the mentally ill. The consciousness has to be treated, and the illness of the consciousness has to be removed. Then it regains its original condition.

To come to the analogy of dream once again, our fall from the Garden of Eden, or descent into the mortal body from the original condition of universality, is akin to the condition of entry into dream. We have not become a fly or a moth or a butterfly, as it appears to be in dream. Though we think that we are a butterfly in dream, we have not become a butterfly. We are only imagining through the mind due to a peculiarity in consciousness. But, if we had actually become that, there would be no coming back to the waking consciousness of the human body. It is exactly like a disease of the mind. It is nothing but a consciousness-

illness. The consciousness projecting itself externally in an imagined space and time is called creation. There is, therefore, a chance of our returning to the original state by untying these knots through which we have been tied to *samsara*.

There are grades of knots. These are called *granthis* in mystical psychology. *Granthis* are like rope knots but are actually psychic knots, the knots of the mind. We may call them the knots of consciousness, if we like, which have somehow or other got stifled into a consciousness of these knots, so that the knots cannot become aware of there being a long rope behind them. If there is a longish rope with several knots at various places on the rope, the knots do not cease to be the rope, though they are knots; they are knots of the rope itself. There may be a hundred knots, but they are constituted of the very stuff of the rope. But if the structure of the knot becomes conscious of that particular structure only, and not the rope aspect of the structure, that would be bondage, or *samsara*. Similarly, we are conscious of the name-and-form aspect of our personality, and not the essential part of our personality. We are like this rope that is tied into a knot. The knot is the *nama-rupa*. It is the form, the shape, the configuration, but it is not the essence. The essence is something else.

Now, we have to slowly untie these knots of *nama-rupa* and realise the essence, and the way of doing this is the practice of yoga. The various stages of yoga, for instance, are mentioned in the system of Patanjali—*yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. These are the stages of the untying process of the

knots of consciousness, by which we gradually expand the dimension of our being and become conscious of larger and larger vistas of our own personality, getting wider and wider as we go higher and higher until we reach the highest Universal which includes all the particulars.

IV - COSMOLOGY

Now this is, in a different way, the subject of the Taittiriya Upanishad also, wherein we are given a cosmological treatment of the entire bondage of the soul, and the process of the liberation of the soul from this bondage. As the Aitareya told us that the one Atman alone was, nothing else external to the Atman existed, it became the many as the Universal and entered into it, and projected itself as the various divinities, became the *jivas*, had these experiences, etc., so does the Taittiriya Upanishad tell us.

The original being is *satyam*, *jnanam*, *anantam*; or we may say *satyam*, *jnanam*, *anandam*— (*satchidananda*), where there is a simultaneous experience of everything, not a successive experience of particulars as we have today. This is the interpretation given by the commentators of the passage which reads as "*saha brahmana vipaschita*". In that state of Brahman, there is an instantaneous experience of all things. Even when we use the word 'instantaneous', the idea of time lingers in our mind. We cannot get rid of the idea of the time factor. We think everything is experienced at the same time. This is how we think in our own temporal way. It is not a simultaneity of temporal events that is called an instantaneous experience there. It is a timeless experience, because it is spaceless Being.

Now the Taittiriya cosmological treatment is as follows. The universe of the five elements—ether, air, fire, water, earth—is a condensation, as it were, of the Atman itself. There was a gradual descent of the Atman into greater and greater particularity, and together with it greater and greater externality. There is particularity, externality and

grossening of the cause into the effect. "*Tasmadva etasmad atmanah akasah sambhutah, akasat vayuh, vayor agnih, agneh apah, adbhyah prithivi,*" etc. The individual being comes as a consequence of these universal manifestations of the elements. Here again, even in the Taittiriya, we stand as effects to the Universal which stands in the position of a cause, as in the case of the doctrine of the Aitareya. Though the universe is an effect of God, it is a cause of our experience. We have no control over the elements. We cannot order the earth, water, fire, air or ether to behave in this way or that way. In this sense, they are causes of our experiences. The objects precede our experience.

There seems to be some great point in the doctrines of realism as well as idealism, which are the dominant schools of philosophy. The realist holds that objects come first, experience comes afterwards. But the idealist thinks that experience comes first and the object afterwards. There is a great quarrel among these schools of thought, but there need not be any quarrel. Both these standpoints seem to be correct because they speak from different positions and different points of view altogether. There is a metaphysical idealism implied behind even the empirical realism of perception of objects. We perceive the world, no doubt, as something external to us, and we know very well that the world was there even before we were born; therefore, realism is right. The world of objects in its physical form precedes the experience thereof by the individual experiencer. But idealism is also right, because there is a consciousness underlying the very manifestation of the things. The whole universe ultimately can be reduced into

consciousness, because the objects which are apparently external to us are conditioned by this perceiving consciousness in various degrees.

The Taittiriya tells us that there was thus the creation down to the earth, and from the earth arose vegetation of various kinds, herbs or *aushadhis* which became the diet of the individual, the Purusha, "*aushadhibhyah annam*". "*Annat purushah*": The individual grows out of the food that he takes. Here is again an interesting factor that we have to observe.

We are constituted of *anna*, or food. It is not merely the physical body that is constituted of food; everything that we are is nothing but the food that we take. As cloth is made of threads, or as any composite object is made up of the component factors, so is the total individuality of ours, including the psychic individuality, constituted of certain bits of experience and bits of matter. Thought is nothing but the various functions it performs. The various feelings and emotions and the volitions put together constitute what we call the mind, the fabric of psychic personality. The body again is constituted of these elements only—earth, water, fire, air and ether, etc. Everything in the so-called individuality of ours is a composite structure, or *sanghatta*, of various factors which can be dismembered and broken into their component parts. These compositions of individuality become the causes of the various experiences we pass through in our life.

Our experiences are through the layers of our personality. These layers are called *koshas* in the language of the Upanishads. A *kosha* is a sheath, like a sheath or

scabbard for a sword. These sheaths are something like peels of onion growing one over the other, and while there can be many such layers conceivable, five of them are mentioned as predominantly experienced by us in our day-to-day life. These are the so-called *annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnanamaya* and *anandamaya koshas*. These *koshas* are not actually like peels of an onion, though the illustration gives some idea of what these *koshas* are, because one peel of an onion is not connected with another peel. They are independent; but the *koshas* are not so independent. They are various gradations of density, one slowly passing into the other, and we cannot know where one begins and where one ends. Thus, we can finally say that there is only one *kosha*, which appears as fivefold on account of the gradations of density, all of which are ruled over by the central light of the Atman.

All this is, of course, out of our sight. We have descended so low into the physical externality of our experience that the Atman, which is universal in its original status, has projected itself out of the senses and come out of the body, as it were; it is now looking back towards its own self as an object outside. It has completely lost itself in matter. To lose itself in matter is not so bad as to come out of it and then look upon it as an object of its own self. This is what the senses do. So in one sense we are far, far removed from reality, much more than even inorganic matter, because we have come out of the material body and then projected our consciousness backwards, as it were, looking to matter as an object of our own self.

The universal consciousness has been completely buried in the material content; and after getting buried, it comes out of it in a reflected form, becomes the *jiva*, and looks at its own body as an external something. So we can imagine why there is desire for objects. It is the desire of the Atman for its own self. It is not asking for anybody else; it is wanting its own self. It cannot get it. It has become mad completely, and is in the mental hospital now. The whole world is such a crazy house of delirious individuals. What has actually happened to us we cannot explain, and the less we say about it the better. Such a catastrophic event has taken place, which we regard as heaven itself. How happy we are in the world! We are very happy with a cool drink, with a fan or a refrigerator. Everything gives happiness to us, but we do not know that we are diseased to the core and we are trying to scratch the itch to some extent to see that it does not give us agony in an intensified manner. We are not going to cure the disease. No activity of ours in this world can be a cure of this disease of *samsara*, from the point of view of the magnitude of the suffering in which we are involved and the magnitude of the catastrophe that has taken place. It requires a herculean task to bring the consciousness back. Mere activity born of ignorance is not going to be an aid.

We have heard people say that Acharya Sankara was against *karma*. There is a point in what he says, though many people do not understand what the implication of his statement is. Every action that we do normally is a movement of ignorance in the direction of an object that is there outside—apparently, but not really. How can a

movement in the direction of an apparently existent something liberate us from bondage? If our activities are directed to the sublimation of individuality, and have as their purpose the universalisation of our status, that could be Karma Yoga. That is not what Acharya Sankara condemns. He condemns *karma* which is binding in its nature, which is born of the ignorant feeling that body is real and, therefore, everything that is associated with the body is also real.

An activity that is directed to self-satisfaction of the body is bondage. That is not going to liberate us. But all that we do in this world is nothing but that. We are not doing Karma Yoga. We should not be misguided. If we are consciously directing our activity towards the efflorescence of our individuality towards the Universal, then it is Karma Yoga. On the other hand, if we merely drift like a fly from place to place, it is not Karma Yoga. Any activity involving sweating and toiling cannot be called Karma Yoga unless the consciousness is there behind it. Otherwise, it becomes an ordinary, empty, humdrum activity which is impulse-driven rather than consciousness-motivated.

This distinction has to be carefully drawn. Impulse-driven activity is different from consciously directed yoga practice. And how many of us are conscious of what we are doing? We are driven by impulse only. When we are feeling hot because of the atmosphere outside, we feel like mitigating it by a contrary activity. When we are hungry, we are doing something contrary to it. Everything that we do is a contrary activity in respect of the particular experience through which we are passing. We have no idea

of the basic disease behind it or the ideal that is ahead of us. But if this is clear, well, it cannot be called action. It is a movement of consciousness.

So these are the five *koshas*, as I mentioned. The *annamaya kosha* is the physical body. But it is not that the physical body comes first in the process of creation; the causal body comes first. The causal hardens itself into the subtle, and the subtle becomes the gross. These three bodies are the objects of experience in the sleep, dream and waking conditions, respectively. It is the causal body that we experience in sleep, the subtle body in dream, and the physical body in waking. These three bodies are subdivided into the five *koshas*, or the sheaths. The innermost one is called the *anandamaya kosha*. The next one is called the *vijnanamaya kosha*. Further to it is the *manomaya kosha*. Then we have the *pranamaya kosha*, and lastly we have the grossest one, the *annamaya kosha*.

The *annamaya kosha* means the physical sheath constituted of the food that we intake. *Anna* is food; and as I mentioned earlier, the various impressions created by our sensory experiences contribute to the stability of the body, including the physical food that we take. And here we have a marked distinction of the limbs of the body—head, ear, nose, etc. We can feel that the various limbs of our body are completely cut off from the limbs of the bodies of others. In spite of the Upanishad crying out that all this manifestation has come from the One, we are least conscious of this fact, and we cannot even dream at any time in our life that we have any connection with the wall standing out there. Such is the condition of physical experience, where limbs are cut

off completely into a little prison house of this body in which the Atman abides, as if it is its own property. Now these activities of the physical body are driven or motivated by inner impulses coming from higher realms, and these subtler realms which are more pervasive in their nature are the other *koshas* mentioned, which are inside the physical body.

We are not the physical body only, as many people may mistake themselves to be. Inside the physical body there is an energy body; it is called the *pranamaya sarira*. The subtle electric force that energises the whole physical system, as copper wires are energised by or charged with electric force driven by the power house, is the *prana*. The *prana* is an invisible *sakti*; it is a power. We cannot define it, just as we cannot define electricity. It is what we call the life principle, the breathing process; and the sense of 'life' that we feel in us is due to the presence of the activity of the *prana*. It is difficult to translate this word into English. It is vital force, vital energy, life principle, or whatever we may call it. Just as in a live wire electric energy charges every particle or atom of the wire and we cannot know which is the wire and which is electricity (but if we touch the wire we will get a shock), likewise we cannot know which is the body and which is the *prana*. They have become one, so that if we touch any part of the body, it looks as if we are being touched. Our life has become one with the vehicle which is the body; the vehicle has become one with the driver. They are identical; we cannot separate one from the other.

Now, this *prana* is the external-most manifestation of a still subtler energy which we call mind. The mind is transparent enough to reflect the consciousness of the Atman, whereas the *prana* is not so transparent. It is opaque, comparatively; it is *rajas*-ridden, and it is very active. Wherever there is an excess of activity, or *rajas*, there cannot be a reflection of the Atman and, therefore, *prana* does not reflect consciousness. It requires the help or aid of the mind that is more transparent in its nature. Though the mind, too, has *rajas* and *tamas* in it in a certain percentage, it has a greater predominance of *sattva* in it. So the thinking faculty, or the psychic faculty, becomes the interior controlling agent of the other external sheaths, the *pranamaya sarira* and the *annamaya sarira*.

The sense organs are contained in this body. We are generally told that the *karmendriyas*, or the organs of action—speaking, grasping, locomotion, etc., which are the tendencies to action and the limbs that help such activity—are all motivated and controlled by the *prana*. The *prana* is the synthesised form of *rajasic* force, and the *karmendriyas*, or the organs of action, are the discrete or the diversified forms of the same energy. So we may say that all our activities are nothing but *prana* working. But these activities have ideas behind them, thoughts behind them. Thoughts precede action.

The mind together with the senses of knowledge constitute the *manomaya kosha*, or the mental sheath. Here we are in an animal level, practically. On the *pranic* level, we are like vegetables; and on the purely physical level, we are like inanimate matter. But on the thinking level, we are

like animals, and only on the intellectual level are we superior to animals. That is a still higher stage. The *vijnana*, or the intellect, is something like a purified form of the mind. It is purified in the sense that it is capable of determinate thinking, while the mind is usually engaged in indeterminate thinking. There is a translucent feeling of the presence of things and an indistinct thought of objects outside when the mind operates. It cannot decide, it cannot judge, it cannot discriminate, it cannot argue, and it cannot come to a conclusion. This is the mind, as we see it operating in animals, for instance. This is what we call the instinct level, when we are not self-conscious to the extent necessary for judging things in terms of pros and cons, etc.

The senses of knowledge—seeing, hearing, etc.—are the manifestations of the mind, just as the organs of action are the manifestations of the *prana*. While the organs of action are in the *pranamaya kosha*, or the energy body, the senses of knowledge are in the *manomaya kosha*, or the mental sheath. They are internal because they are conscious in some way, whereas the *prana* is not conscious; it is simply active. The *manomaya kosha*, or the mental sheath, acts in collaboration with the *vijnanamaya kosha*, or the intellectual sheath, which also works with the aid of the senses of knowledge, so that we may say the intellect, the mind and the senses of knowledge form a single family. They are a single group, and they work together. This is the highest point of individuality conceivable. We are now on the intellectual level, having risen above the mental level, the *prana* level of the vegetable kingdom, and the inorganic level. So we are able to think in a logical fashion,

understand the causes of effects, and effects of causes, etc., and link causes with effects. This is a prerogative of the human individual that causative thinking is possible, whereas animals are incapable of doing that. They cannot remember things as we do. We can think of the past, and we can think ahead. This is the intellectual level.

Now, consciousness brilliantly manifests itself in the intellect, no doubt; but we are not satisfied merely with the intellect. Understanding alone does not make us happy. Happiness is a different thing altogether. The great Reality, the Supreme Being, is said to be constituted of three constitutive essences, we may say: *sat*, *chit* and *ananda*—Existence, Consciousness and Bliss.

We can see existence even in a wall or a brick, but not consciousness. We can see existence and consciousness in a human being where the intellect functions—when we think, or argue and speak; but we need not be happy at that time. So happiness is not necessarily a condition which follows intellectual functions, because even in the intellect there is an element of *rajas*. Happiness is possible of experience only when there is freedom from *rajas* totally. There should not be an iota of *rajas* or *tamas* if we are to be happy. If there is *tamas*, we will be asleep like a stone. If there is *rajas*, we are awakened from sleep and we are conscious of things, but not happy. In that condition of *rajas*, we are like muddled water which is shaky, where a reflection of the sun is possible, but not a clear reflection. Only when *sattva* predominates is there a clear reflection of Reality and we can experience happiness.

Happiness is what we seek. We can understand that it is not ordinary knowledge that we are after in this world. We are after knowledge for the sake of a satisfaction that it brings. And, how knowledge brings satisfaction is a very important topic. Happiness is what we are after; it is happiness for which everyone works, and happiness seems to be the aim and objective behind even the operation of consciousness in this world. Consciousness is incomplete, and existence is incomplete, if bliss is not there. That bliss is the ultimate content of the Absolute. How it comes, and how we are partially experiencing it in our individual lives, we shall see later.

V – ANANDA MIMAMSA

We will continue the subject of the Taittiriya Upanishad. We observed that our individuality is constituted of different layers, and these layers are called *koshas* in Sanskrit. There are primarily five such *koshas*, or sheaths, in which our consciousness is enveloped. These sheaths are nothing but the forces of objectivity that pull the consciousness outwardly in terms of space and time. Thus it becomes clear that these sheaths are not substances or material objects like five walls that may be built round a person sitting inside a room. They are mere urges of consciousness to move outward in greater and greater density, and with more and more of impetuosity towards externality of experience.

Our unhappiness consists only in this much— that in order to come in contact with anything outside, we have first of all to forget ourselves. The more we cling to the objects of sense outside, the more is the forgetfulness of our own consciousness. There is *atma-nasha*, or destruction of selfhood, as it were, in a very significant manner so that, in every clinging to an object, there is a transference of ourselves to the particular object in which we are interested, or towards which our consciousness is moving.

Every kind of love, every type of attachment is a transference of oneself to another. If a mother loves the child, the mother has gone; only the child is there. The consciousness of the mother has identified itself with the child's body in such an intense manner that she does not exist any more. The child alone exists for her, and anything that happens to the child appears to happen to the mother.

If the child is happy, the mother is happy; otherwise, the mother is not. If the child goes away from this world, it looks as if the mother herself is dead. This is the case with every kind of transference of consciousness to objects. Every attachment, positive or negative in the form of love or hatred, has this characteristic in it. So all our sorrows in life can be attributed to this peculiar trait in our consciousness to go outwardly—either positively as love, or negatively as hatred—in respect of certain things.

All this activity is undertaken through these peculiar apertures of personality called the sheaths, by means of which the consciousness limits itself by a kind of focusing its attention upon limited groups of objects of sense. This is what is called *samsara* in Sanskrit, which means earthly existence, or the life of bondage. It is bondage because the consciousness clings to what is not really there. It is moving towards a phantom under the impression that the Self is there. One of the characteristics of selfhood is non-externality. You can never become another; and by 'you' what is intended or meant is the deepest consciousness or intelligence in you.

The body or the sheaths are not us. When we isolate the experiences of the sheaths, for instance as in deep sleep, we will find that we can exist independent of the function of the sheaths. And how did we exist in sleep? As a pure centre of awareness. There was no externality or corporeality. This consciousness which we really are is the selfhood of ours. To repeat, by selfhood what we mean is, we have some status in us which cannot be externalised or transferred to something else. Now the transference which takes place

between the Self which we are and the object outside is a false one. All loves, therefore, are false. There is no such thing as true love in the world. It is false because the Self artificially transfers itself to something, while such a transference is not permissible under the very characteristic of the Self. Hence, every person who loves a thing shall also reap sorrow afterwards. No one can be happy eternally with external loves of any kind.

Now comes the question of love and happiness. How are we happy? And how is it that when there is love for a particular object, happiness seems to manifest itself from within? This is a very interesting philosophical as well as psychological feature in us. This is mentioned in a few words (perhaps only three or four words) towards the end of the Taittiriya Upanishad when it discusses the nature of the innermost sheath in us, called the *anandamaya kosha*. The causal sheath, the most subtle and pervasive and the innermost of sheaths in us, in our personality, is called the *anandamaya kosha*. It is called *anandamaya* because it is characterised by blissfulness or happiness. *Ananda* means happiness; *maya* means 'filled with'. It is filled with and constituted of happiness only, warp and woof.

How we become happy is a subject of psychological analysis. What makes us happy? When we come to the proximity of a loved object, we seem to be happy in our mind: "The object that I love is near me." The nearer we come to it, the greater is the happiness we feel inside. The happiness that one feels at the proximity of the loved object is called the *priya*. It is not the apex of happiness, because we have not possessed the object. As yet, we have only seen

it; we are near it and it is near us. But happiness increases when it is under our possession. Merely seeing it from a distance is not of sufficient satisfaction to us, though that also brings satisfaction. Whatever is to our liking, we wish to see it with our eyes directly, for as long as possible or perpetually.

This happiness deepens when the object concerned comes under our possession and we have a feeling that it is ours. We are not merely seeing it, but it is ours; it is not somebody else's. Take, for example, money. We can see a lot of money that does not belong to us. Well, even if we see money that does not belong to us, we will have a sort of happiness. That happiness is a peculiar connection that the mind has with the value called money. It may not be ours, but we feel a sense of agitation if we see millions of rupees in front of us. But if it is ours, we can imagine how happy we will be. The happiness becomes most intense when we enjoy the object, and not merely possess it. These three states or conditions or degrees of happiness of perception, possession and enjoyment are called *priya*, *moda* and *pramoda*. This is to give an external analysis of the nature of happiness born of love for things outside.

But now comes the psychological feature. How is it that happiness arises at all? What do we mean by happiness? Can we define it? Is it a substance? Is it a thing? Is it an object? Is it material or non-material? Is it outside us or inside us? Or, is it midway between the two? Where is it situated? It is not very easy to answer these questions because we are so much concerned with the object, and so much overwhelmed by a contact with the object, that there

is no time for us, nor even interest in us, to analyse the structure of the experience of happiness. But ignorance is bliss, as they usually say. We know nothing of the nature of this happiness and, therefore, we are blissful, in an utter ignorance of the character of the process that is taking place in the experience of this happiness.

An analysis would make it clear that happiness is not in the object. If a particular object which attracts our attention is the source of happiness, then happiness should be really inside it, as a part of its nature. Then, as the sun is shining for all equally and not merely for one person, the object concerned also should be a source of happiness to everyone in the world, if happiness is the real character of that object. But we will see on observation that this is not true. The object of our love may not also be the object of other people's love. On the other hand, that object may evoke hatred, the contrary emotion, in certain other persons for different reasons altogether. So, it is not true that the object is the source of happiness. The happiness has not come from the object, and whoever imagines that it is located in the object is an ignoramus of the first water.

But how then happiness comes, is a question. If it is not in the object, it should be somewhere! From where does the happiness come? Now we have to remember the observations we made earlier about the nature of Reality or Perfection. In our study of the Aitareya Upanishad, we noted that the Atman alone was; nothing else existed in the beginning. "*Atma va idam agre asit; na anyat kinchana mishat.*" It was Perfection Complete. It was omnipresence; nothing else existed. There is the selfhood in us, which is

another name for the deepest non-externalisable consciousness. That alone existed, says the Aitareya Upanishad. What existed then? The Self alone existed; and what is the Self? Anything that cannot be externalised is the Self.

Then, what is the meaning of that non-externalisable Reality, if the universe is an external something? Well, we know very well the universe is an external object. But the Upanishad says that only the non-external was there. It means to say, somehow or other the universe was experienced in that state in a non-externalised fashion. The universe was the Self, which means to say that there was a Universal Self, and not the particular self of mine or yours, which conditions itself into a bodily embodiment and then regards the world or universe as something outside. So, what is Reality, the Ultimate Truth? The non-externalised Atman is the Reality, by which what is meant is that the Universal Selfhood alone was there; nothing else was.

What we call Truth or Reality is non-externalisable consciousness, which is the Atman. It is the Atman; it is the Self. It is non-externalisable and, therefore, it is universal. Because it is universal, it should be present everywhere. That is the very meaning of universality. Therefore, it is in you, it is in me, and it is in everyone. How does it exist in you, in me and in others? In the nature of a Self. You must rack your brain a little bit to understand what this implication means. The Universal is not the vast spread-out physical object we call nature in the form of sky, air, trees, mountains, etc., because that is externalised. The Self is a

non-externalised something, and it is also consciousness; and that was there. That existed, and nothing else existed.

If that was the reality, nothing else can be the reality today. That which is real is real in the past, in the present and in the future. So even today, that law persists. When we say that the Atman alone existed, it does not mean that it existed only many years back and that today it does not exist. It is only a way of explaining things to temporal minds which cannot understand, except in a chronological or historical fashion, any narrative that is given. So, even today it is of the same nature. Thus, the Atman in us, the Self in us, even today is non-externalisable.

So the consciousness in us which is moving towards the object outside is really a non-externalisable something. Even today it is universal in nature. Our consciousness even just now is universal; it is not that it was universal only many, many aeons back. So remember this point: even just now, at this very moment, our consciousness is universal, because that is part of Reality. So when we move towards an object of sense in affection, in attraction or in love, what happens is that there is a channelisation of this universality of consciousness in a very limited manner through the avenues of the sense organs. It may be through the eyes, it may be through the ears, or it may be through the touch, etc. This channelisation of this Universal is the limitation of this Universal for the purpose of conceiving this object as something outside.

All that I told you is a kind of introduction to this main point of how happiness arises. How do we feel happy when an object comes into our possession or when we enjoy it?

What happens is that the so-called externality characterising the mind at the time of its movement towards the object ceases when we possess the object. Why does the mind move towards the object outside? Because it is not ours. We are not always thinking of our own body so much as we think of another person's body or other things, or a substance which is not yet in our possession. Love ceases when it is possessed. It enhances itself when it is not possessed. A person who has confidence that he has enough of wealth is not so much thinking of it as the one who does not have it.

So is the case with every kind of affection. Our love for a thing is intense when it is not possessed by us. But when it is already under our control, the love diminishes for the reason that love is not any more necessary under the condition of the possession of the object. The love that we feel is nothing but a movement of the mind towards the object for the purpose of grabbing it. But when we have already got it, where is the point in the mind moving towards it once again? So, the mind withdraws itself.

Now, what is the meaning of withdrawal of the mind? It means the non-externalisation of the mind. The externalisation of the mind outside was for the purpose of grabbing the object of sense. But, when the purpose is served—when the object has come near us and we have got it—the mind need not think of it. The externalisation of the mind ceases, and a miracle takes place. This miracle is an essential, psychological nature of happiness.

When the externalising force of the mind ceases on account of the satisfaction felt by the possession of the

object, there is, for a fraction of a moment, a flash of the universality of our consciousness. It may be for a split second, or perhaps less than that. We cannot know how quickly it comes like a flash of lightning. The mind ceases to think of the object because of having had the satisfaction of possessing it, and the cessation of the mind is the cessation of externality of consciousness. The moment this cessation takes place, the non-externalised Self within us bursts out; and happiness is nothing but the experience of non-externalised consciousness. Thus, the happiness has come from us; it has not come from outside. So we are happy on account of a condition that has arisen in us, for which the object outside has become an agent of action. It has only worked as a spade to dig out the happiness from within us. The spade itself is not the cause of happiness. It is an instrument to dig out the treasure.

The treasure was inside us and not outside, but this point is always missed by the mind on account of the quickness of the duration of this experience of happiness. If it had lasted for half an hour, or one or two hours, we would have had time enough to think as to what is happening. But it is a miracle indeed, and it does not last for more than a second. All happiness is miraculous, instantaneous, fractional. We cannot be happy for days together. That is not possible. It is not given to us in this mortal world.

The moment the happiness flashes forth, we feel an ecstasy which is beyond description in language, and at that time we are under the misconception that this happiness has come from the object because we think, "When the

object was far away from me, I was not happy; it has come near me and, therefore, I am happy." So naturally we argue logically, as it were, but falsely, that the happiness has come from the object. It has not come from the object. It has come from a condition of perfection that has been aroused in our consciousness by the proximity of the object which has acted merely as an external agent.

So *ananda* or happiness, which is in the *anandamaya kosha*, is a limited expression of the universal *ananda*, which is the essential nature of the Atman. As I mentioned to you, this Atman is also called Brahman, because it is everywhere. The selfhood of Brahman in every particular is defined by the term Atman, and the universality of the same Atman is defined by the term Brahman. So they mean one and the same thing, like the space all-pervading and the space inside a vessel. They do not make any distinction essentially or characteristically. This is the Ananda Mimamsa—the analysis of the nature of happiness and love, etc.

We are happy very rarely in life, on account of there being very few occasions when the mind comes back to its own source with the satisfaction of having possessed the things that we need. Always we are in search of things, but we do not get those things; and so the search continues throughout our life. As long as the search continues, the mind is outside; it is focused elsewhere. Therefore, we are not of ourselves; we have transferred ourselves to objects outside which have not been possessed by us. So perpetually we are unhappy. From morning to night there is only sorrow; there is no joy.

But by chance, by some miracle of nature or wonder, if the object comes into our possession, at that moment we are happy. But, how long can the object be under our possession? Nobody can possess anything permanently, for the law of nature is such. Nothing belongs to us, and we belong to nobody. Everything belongs to one single whole, and so the consideration on the part of any individual that one can grab a thing, possess it and enjoy it eternally is again a false notion. So, there must be bereavement or separation of the object from oneself under the very law of nature.

The coming together of two objects is also a miracle. The coming into contact of the subject with the so-called object of affection is due to the working of some *karma*. When the wind blows in a particular direction on the surface of the ocean, logs of wood that are floating there come together, and they appear to meet. When the wind blows in another direction, the logs get separated. So the logs may think, if they have consciousness, that they are friends—they are coming together, and talking to each other, and liking each other. We like each other due to the wind that blows; if the wind blows in a different direction, we will be thrown off in some other direction.

The law of nature, the law of universality, or we may call it the law of *karma* in a particular way, has brought about the union of one thing with another thing under certain given conditions, and that seems to be the source of our happiness. The bereavement that we think of, or the loss of objects that takes place, is due to the contrary action of the very same law under the dispensation of its own

constitution. Transfer of things from place to place is done according to the law of the universe, and not according to the law of our personal wish. Personal wish has to be subordinated to the universal will of the Supreme, if we are to be happy. So this is a very unfortunate conclusion that we come to when we actually analyse how we love things, why we love things, how happiness arises in us, etc. We seem to be utterly mistaken in all our attempts at possession of things for the purpose of personal satisfaction.

This *anandamaya kosha*, or the sheath of bliss, is the subtlest layer, the most initial movement of consciousness outwardly. Then it becomes grosser as intellect, further grosser as mind, and then as the senses, *prana*, and the physical body, and then as its relationship with the other physical objects. This is called the world of bondage, relationships, externality, contact, separation, sorrow and so on. So here we have in quintessence the meaning of the way in which the five sheaths work in the individual due to the isolation of consciousness from the Total.

This was the subject of the Aitareya Upanishad—how the individual was isolated, segregated, cut off from the Universal Whole, and how it wriggles forth to come in contact with the Universal by means of external contact which is called affection, love, etc. All this is a drama which is inscrutable to the ordinary limited, bound mind. To disentangle from this mire of bondage is the purpose of the analysis of the Upanishad.

The Taittiriya Upanishad goes on further. The Universal Absolute is like a non-existence for us. What

exists for us is the world only. If we think that only the world exists, and the Absolute does not exist merely because we cannot see it with our eyes, we are going to be miserable indeed. We will also be negated completely from the selfhood of our experience on account of the wrong impression that we entertain that the Absolute does not exist. "*Asanneva sa bhavati, asat brahmeti veda chet. Asti brahmeti chet veda, santamenam tato viduriti.*" Whoever denies God denies himself, because our own self is nothing but the replica of God. The denial of the Absolute is the denial of one's own selfhood of character because, as we have already seen, we are constituted of the very substance of the Absolute. The Absolute, or the Universal, is That outside which there can be nothing, including ourselves. So in denying God or the Absolute, we deny ourselves, which is absurd.

The Absolute appears to be non-existent from the point of view of the senses, not from its own point of view. It is non-existent to the senses because the senses can perceive only what is in space and in time. But the Absolute Brahman is not in space and in time; it is the Self. Again we come to the point that we cannot see the Self, just as we cannot see our own eyes. The Self is the seeing consciousness. That is called the Atman; that is called Brahman or the Absolute. How can we see it? Who can see the Seer?

We cannot see the Seer because the Seer is the seer of things. The Atman cannot be beheld in the way we behold a building outside or people in the world externally, because the beholding outside is done through the senses. But the

senses function on account of the light of the Atman. The deepest Self within us cannot be experienced by any activity of the senses. And if we try to contact the Absolute with the help of the senses or through a test tube in a laboratory in a scientific manner, as they call it today, then we will be a failure. The Absolute is the selfhood in things and it can be known only by self-restraint, by self-control, by *tapas*.

Now we come to the importance of *tapas*, whereby Varuna is supposed to have taught his son Bhrigu the knowledge of the Atman. Bhrigu approached his father and said to him: "Master, Father, Sir, teach me Brahman." The father gave the following definition of Brahman and asked him to contemplate on it. "*Yato va imani bhutani jayante; yena jatani jivanti; yat prayantyabhisamvisanti; tad vijijnasasva; tat brahma*": That from which everything has come, That in which everything abides, and That to which everything must return one day is Brahman, the Absolute. This is a very difficult definition; we cannot make any sense out of it, and he was asked to meditate on this.

He went on meditating. He could not catch the full import at all. So he realised that the whole material universe is Brahman. "*Annam brahmeti vyajanat*." Due to the intensity of concentration, there was a realisation of the togetherness of all the physical things in the world. This is what we will experience in meditation. If we concentrate intensely on any object, we will find the inter-connectedness of the things in this universe in a physical manner at the initial outset. This was what Bhrigu realised. He realised *anna*, food, matter, the physical universe itself is Brahman. Then he went to the father and submitted,

"This is how I realised. Please tell me about Brahman. Is it true?" "*Tapasa brahma vijijnasasva, tapo brahmeti*": You contemplate further; you will know what it is. He did not give any answer. The father never initiated him into any further mysteries. He simply said, "*Tapas taptva*": Restrain your mind more and more, concentrate more and more, meditate more and more, and you will realise what Brahman is.

The universal material is not the Ultimate Reality. This was what Bhrigu realised by deep meditation. He entered further inside into the substance behind the physical universe and came to experience that subtle vital energy permeating the whole cosmos as Reality. It is called *prana*. "*Prano brahmeti vyajanat.*"

Earlier we studied the five sheaths in an individualistic fashion, which are experienced in a cosmical fashion by deep meditation. The individual is a cross section of the universal. Whatever is in the universal we will find in the individual, but in a minute, microscopic manner. The five sheaths are individual as well as cosmic. When we regard ourselves as this physical body alone, then we will have a notion only of the individual five sheaths. These are the *annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnanamaya* and *anandamaya koshas* mentioned.

But in real meditation, we concentrate our mind on the absoluteness of this object. That is the meaning of meditation, incidentally. Meditation is the fixing of the attention of our mind on any object exclusively, as if it is the total reality and nothing else exists outside it. This sort of intense fixing of the attention of the mind on any given

object bursts the bubble of individuality, or the limitation of the mind. Then we are made to enter into the ocean, with which this particularity of the object and our own body are all connected.

So likewise, meditation was practised by Bhrigu. From the universal physical he went to the universal vital that is *prana*, universal *prana*. And he went to the father and said: "This is what I experienced. Please teach me further." The father did not give any answer. He said, "*Tapasa brahma vijijnasasva*": Meditate further and realise for yourself. He was a very good Guru. He would not tell anything. He simply said, "Meditate further." Perhaps he was the best Guru. It is no use simply superimposing some ideas on the mind of the disciple by saying something which the mind cannot grasp. So he said, "Concentrate more, practise more, sit more and more for meditation, and see what comes out."

Then he realised that the cosmic mind is the Supreme Reality. *Mano brahmeti vyajanat*. This is still subtler. The cosmic mind which vibrates everywhere in the form of *prana*, or the vital energy in the cosmos, was realised by him in his direct experience. Again he went to the father and said, "This is what I experienced; teach me further." The father replied, "*Tapasa brahma vijijnasasva*": Meditate further and know for yourself. Then he realised the cosmic understanding, the intellect or intelligence—*mahat tattva* as it is sometimes called —as Brahman: "*Vijnanam brahmeti vyajanat*".

Now in all these realisations, there was a little bit of externality. Whatever be the expanse of this experience in

its cosmic manifestation, there is still a sort of externality in it. That externality should also go completely into universal subjectivity. That had not taken place yet. So, after the realisation of the cosmic understanding, *mahat tattva*, again he went to the father and said, "Teach me Brahman." The father said, "Meditate further and realise for yourself." Then he realised "*anandam brahmeti vyajanat*": Bliss is Brahman. The constitutive essence of Reality is happiness. It is not objectivity; it is not an attribute, and it is not a thing.

So now we come to the essential point of the Upanishad and the essential aim of life itself. We are in search of happiness, and not in search of objects. If we are under the wrong notion that we want bungalows, lands, gardens, property, airplanes, friends and relationships, we are fools of the first water. These are not what we want. All these are tools that we use for the purpose of evoking that universal happiness within us. That happiness is the real substance. Whatever may be our earthly possession, if we are not happy at the core of our heart, what is the use of that possession? If possession alone is sufficient and nothing else is wanted by us, then we can strive for such possessions. There are many in this world who have a lot of possessions, but they are miserable at the core. Unhappy is man. He is born with unhappiness, he lives in unhappiness, and dies in unhappiness. He lives merely in search of happiness, but he does not find it at all. It cannot be found, because it is inside him. How will he find it? He cannot search for himself outside in space and time!

So, by deep meditation Bhrigu realised the universality of happiness. Now we are to understand another important feature of this happiness. We, as students of psychology, in the Western sense especially, are likely to characterise happiness as a quality of an object, like greenness, blueness and whiteness, etc., and think that happiness also is a character. "I have happiness. I am happy." Such statements are likely to lead to a misconstruction of the very meaning of happiness. We are not happy in the sense that the flower is blue or the wall is white, etc. It is not an adjective of ourself. Happiness is not an attribute, in an external sense.

Again we are coming to externality, which has to be abolished from the mind completely. There cannot be an attribute or quality unless there is space and time. Now we have gone beyond space and time; so, where comes the question of attribute? So, it is not that we are happy in an adjectival fashion. But we have come into possession of our true nature by the withdrawal of sense activities, and we have merged our consciousness in our own Self which is the true substance of things, and not merely a quality. This substance is the existence of things, and it is the happiness of things. This existence itself is happiness. "*Raso vai sah*." It is called *rasa*, the quintessence of things. It is the quintessence because it is the innermost substantiality of all objects.

Inside the physical objects we have molecules; inside the molecules we have atoms; inside the atoms there are the electrons, neutrons, protons and what not. Then we have the universal continuum of electric energy. That is the substance of all these little things that we see as bricks and

trees and mountains, etc. The variety of things that we see in this world is nothing but the configuration or formation of this continuum of energy which is universally spread out everywhere in creation as the only substance existing.

Likewise, there is one substance continuously permeating throughout the cosmos—not merely permeating, but existing as everything in the cosmos; that is the substance of things. That substance is itself aware of its own being. That is called *chit* or Consciousness. In Sanskrit we call the continuum of existence as *sat* or *satta*. *Sat* is Pure Being that is universally existent as a continuum, undifferentiated, as the substance of all things. It is aware that it exists in this fashion. So it is *sat* and *chit*, and its experience is *ananda*. The consciousness of our being the universal continuum of substance in the universe is called happiness.

So, what is happiness? It is experience of Godhood. When God reveals Himself within us, we are happy, not otherwise. And even when we take a cup of tea, if we feel a little exhilaration and joy, it is because God has revealed Himself there. Such a simple thing as taking a cup of tea, or cold water in hot summer, makes us feel happy! It is God coming. It is not the water or tea that has given us the happiness. They have acted as instruments outside, to rouse the universality within us for a fraction of a second; and this universality is Godhood. So God is revealing Himself every moment of time in our daily life. But we miss His presence on account of attachment and the misconception that arises on account of sense activities that objects are outside.

So the Taittiriya Upanishad reveals to us a very great truth that bliss is the nature of Reality. It is not merely an adjective; it is the substance of Reality, and we are non-differentiated from that. It is the Self and, therefore, we cannot be outside it; and because we are also the Self, it cannot be outside us. Neither we are outside it, nor is it outside us. There is one totality of Being which is characterised by Selfhood. That is Atman, that is *ananda*, that is Bliss—not a quality, but a substance. So what is within is also without. "*Sa yaschayam purushe yaschasavaditye, sa ekah*": What is shining there as a lustrous sun in the distant skies, and what is within us twinkling as the Atman, they are identical. The macrocosmic and microcosmic are one.

The universe is not bifurcated into the object and the subject, as we imagine. It is one total Being, and one who knows this in direct realisation is the liberated being. Such a person crosses the bondage of the five sheaths. "*Sa ya evam vid*": He knows, who knows this in actual experience and realisation by deep meditation. *"Etam annamayam atmanam upasankramya, etam pranamayam atmanam upasankramya, etam manomayam atmanam upasankramya, etam vijnanamayam atmanam upasankramya, etam anandamayam atmanam upasankramya, etat sama gayannaste."* He is in the universal bliss and ecstasy of exclamation and cannot find words to explain what he feels at that time. It is as if the whole ocean has entered him and is inundating him from all sides, and he has become one with the ocean—not the ocean of waters, but the ocean of happiness. This is the

great conclusion, to the immense glorification and satisfaction of all of us.

This is what the Upanishad presents before us as the great legacy of our culture, to contemplate which we have to find adequate time every day. If we cannot find time to meditate on this truth, what else is the objective of life? So we have to think deeply on this matter and put forth the greatest effort possible for cogitating along these lines, and realise the aim of our life within our own Self as the emblem of universality which God is.

The Taittiriya Upanishad tells something more about this theme of happiness called Ananda Mimamsa—an investigation into the character of happiness. We noted earlier in our analysis that at the time of our coming in contact with a desired object, there is a temporary forgetfulness of both the subjective and the objective sides of experience and there flashes forth, for the fraction of a moment, as it were, a sense of perfection, a feeling of completeness which is the indication of the descent of the Absolute into our consciousness. This is the reason for our being happy when we come in contact with, possess or enjoy an object of our desire.

Now this analysis may also lead to a misconstruction or a misapprehension—namely, that qualitatively at least, though not quantitatively, this little fractional experience of happiness is the same as the bliss of the Absolute. When we have an immense ecstatic experience of happiness at the time of enjoyment of a desired object, are we qualitatively—though not quantitatively, of course—having the same happiness as the one that is the essence of the Absolute?

The Upanishad refutes this notion. Even qualitatively it is not the same, notwithstanding the fact that it is the Absolute that is revealing itself in the form of that happiness. Quantitatively, of course, it is far smaller because it is manifest through a little aperture of our own little mind. So it is like a drop in the terrible ocean of existence. Thus, from the point of view of quantity, it is nothing. Even from the point of view of quality is it nothing, says the Upanishad, so that we need not be under a misconstrued complacency that perhaps there is a little jot of divine experience at the time of sensory contact. It is not so. This is the subject of Ananda Mimamsa in the Taittiriya Upanishad.

We have to understand this new type of analysis very carefully. It is difficult to explain transcendent things in empirical terms. But we have to do that. We have no other alternative. So empirical expressions, comparisons, analogies are resorted to for the purpose of driving home to our minds the nature of the transcendent reality.

What is our notion of happiness? It is the largest amount of possession, freedom from disease, freedom from fear from others, the possession of everything that is existent anywhere to the largest extent possible, a very healthy constitution. We do not want to be children or old people; we must be youths with the capacity to enjoy things to the fullest extent. Also, we should not be idiots; we must be very well educated, learned, cultured, well qualified. All wealth must be ours; all powers should be ours, and there is nothing that we lack. If such a person can exist in this world, that is the least kind of happiness which we can

count as the unit for our computation of the gradation of happiness.

Suppose there is a king of the whole world who is of this nature. Such a king does not exist, has never existed, and perhaps will never exist, but for the purpose of theoretical concept at least, we can imagine the possibility of such a ruler or emperor of the whole world. The whole earth is his, very healthy is this young man, and he has the greatest power conceivable. There is nothing he lacks. He is very learned and educated. His happiness is incalculable. Now, this is the lowest unit—number one for the purpose of our conception. The little joys that we have in our life naturally are nothing compared to the conceptual happiness of this imaginary person. But this is what we call earthly happiness. The emperor's happiness is earthly happiness, though it is entrammelled by opposition from others on account of his being in possession of everything in the world. The Upanishad says that qualitatively one hundred times the happiness of such an imagined emperor is the happiness of the higher region of the Gandharvas, which is internal to the physical world.

The more internal we go into realms of being, the subtler becomes the happiness; the greater is the proximity to Reality, the more intensive is the happiness, qualitatively. There are various realms of being, one inside the other. These realms are subtler and subtler, more and more pervasive expanses of reality, tending nearer and nearer to the Absolute. So the point that is made out here is that the nearer we go to the Absolute, the greater is the quality of the happiness. Nearness does not mean spacially coming

closer. There is no space in the Absolute. Nearness means qualitatively ascending. The degree of happiness increases in comparison with the degree of the intensity of the subtlety of experience, which is what is meant by 'nearness to the Absolute'.

The realm of the Gandharvas, the celestial ministrels, is supposed to be superior to the earthly plane. Higher than the realm of the Gandharvas is the realm of the forefathers, the Pitrus—the realm where our ancestors who are virtuous in their nature are supposed to go and reside in a state of joy. Higher than this is the realm of the Devas, celestials or gods, the angels—paradise, as it is called. Higher than that is the sway which Indra, the king of the celestials, has. Indra is not a man; he is a celestial, capable of exercising any kind of power due to the superior knowledge that he has and the immense subtlety that he enjoys in that realm of paradise. Higher than that is the realm of his own Guru called Brihaspati. Higher than Brihaspati is Prajapati, the Creator himself. Then comes the Absolute.

These are the levels through which we have to ascend. As we go higher and higher, the greater is the happiness; and the Upanishad tells us that each higher realm is constituted of an experience which is tantamount to one hundred times greater happiness than the earlier one. One hundred times the happiness of this imaginary king of this world is the happiness of the Gandharva. One hundred times the happiness of the Gandharva is the happiness of the Pitru. One hundred times the happiness of the Pitru is the happiness of the celestial. One hundred times the happiness of the celestial is the happiness of Indra. One

hundred times the happiness of Indra is the happiness of Brihaspati. One hundred times the happiness of Brihaspati is the happiness of Prajapati, the Creator. One hundred times the happiness of Prajapati is the Absolute Happiness.

So our happiness is nothing. It has no meaning at all. We need not be too complacent that we are also having a jot of divine happiness; it is not so. We are far, far removed from the Absolute in quantity and quality. Wretched is our condition. This is a very important point that is brought home to our minds by the Upanishad.

VI - SOME LIGHT ON YOGA PRACTICE

Why are we so far away from the Absolute, is also a question. The Supreme Being, or Absolute, is transcendent to our level. This transcendence, which we call Brahman or the Absolute, is manifest through space and time by way of externalisation; and in the process of externalisation, the selfhood of experience is gradually lost. The greater the externalisation, diversification, expression, manifestation outwardly towards objects in space and time, the greater is the loss of selfhood. The more we are conscious of an external object, the greater is the loss of self-consciousness. As we noted earlier, in all attachments to objects of sense there is a transference of self to the object, so that we lose ourselves first in order that we may love the object. So self-loss takes place on account of a complete transference of character of selfhood to the object outside. The more we move outwardly, the less is the selfhood of experience; and the greater is the loss of the selfhood, the greater also is the loss in the quality of happiness. So it is the Self that is the source of bliss, not any object or any kind of external movement towards an object. But the more we gravitate towards externality, the more is the extent or the measure of the loss of selfhood in us. Thus, we have descended too far.

According to Vedanta terminology, there is a gradual descent from Brahman to Isvara, from Isvara to Hiranyagarbha, from Hiranyagarbha to Virat, and from Virat there is a further triplication taking place. On one side is the objective world, on the other side the individuals, and in the centre we have got the controlling divinities called

Devatas, so that we, the subjects, look upon the object outside through space and time as if it is bifurcated from us, with no connection at all between one and the other.

Not only that, something worse has taken place. From the causal condition we have come to the intellectual, from the intellectual to the mental, from the mental to the vital, and from the vital we have come to the physical level. These are the five *koshas* mentioned earlier. We can imagine how far we have descended. So there is no wonder that we are unhappy, and that the so-called happiness of sense contact is not divine happiness—though, by means of psychological analysis, we are able to conclude that even that little fraction of so-called happiness of sense contact is due to the presence of the Absolute, by way of reflection and distortion. This is the reason why we are unhappy. This is also the nature of happiness, and this also gives a clue as to how we can reach the Absolute. This method is called yoga.

The practice of yoga is the art of contacting the Absolute. There is no such thing as contacting the Absolute in a literal sense. We know we contact an object, but the Absolute is not an object at all. It is the Self, it is the internal being of everything. How can we contact it? How can we contact our own consciousness? But this is what is meant by yoga. Yoga means union—union of the individual with the Absolute. But what is this union? How can we unite ourself with our own inner being? This is the difficulty. We cannot even imagine what it is. But this union is a metaphorical one; it is not a physical contact. It is metaphorical in the sense that in yoga there is the union of

our consciousness in the present context with the supreme essence that we are. In this practice of yoga, we gradually lessen the degree and the intensity of externality of consciousness and move inward gradually. It is self-control, ultimately, which is called yoga— self-restraint which includes the restraint of the operation of the sense organs, the restraint of the mind, the restraint of the intellect, and the restraint of the impulse to externalise consciousness in any manner whatsoever. The urge of the consciousness to manifest itself in an external form is contrary to yoga.

In the Kathopanishad there is a hint given to us as to how we can practise yoga. There are one or two verses in the Kathopanishad which give the sum and substance of the practice of yoga, which is also the same yoga explained in greater detail in the system of Patanjali. The Kathopanishad says in these verses that the subtle essences of objects are superior to the sensory powers; they are higher in their degree and in quality. Higher than these essences of objects is the mind; higher than the mind is the intellect; higher than the intellect is the cosmic intellect called Mahat, also called Hiranyagarbha. Higher than that is the peaceful undifferentiated causal state called Avyakta. Higher than that is supreme Absolute, Purusha. The same Upanishad mentions the system of practice in another verse. The senses have to be rooted in the mind. The mind has to be centred in the intellect. The intellect has to be fixed in the Cosmic Intellect, and the Cosmic Intellect has to be united with the Peaceful Being. Sometimes this Peaceful Being, Shanta Atman, is identified with the Isvara of the Vedanta. This is how we have to control the mind.

The restraint of the mind and the senses is not an easy affair because, first of all, it is difficult even to understand how this can be done at all. We practise the traditional routines of stopping the breath, not thinking of objects, sometimes not thinking anything at all, and then keeping quiet in a blank state of mind, under the impression that we are practising yoga. These are all like sweeping the ground, but that is not the entire function in a house, though they are important enough from their own points of view. The mind is not such a simple thing as to come under our control in a few days. For this purpose, intense philosophical analysis is necessary together with other accessories such as living in an atmosphere which is conducive to this practice, and study of scriptures and books which will fill the mind with ideas that are elevating in their nature and of the nature of the practice of yoga. Living in the service of a Guru is a great help in this direction. Finally, a very correct grasp of the meaning of self-control is necessary. Since the Absolute is everywhere and all pervading, and its realisation in our own experience is the aim of this practice, withdrawal of the mind from objects implies some subtle technique which is commensurate with, or not in contradistinction with, the presence of the omnipresent Absolute.

Sometimes doubts arise in the mind. "From what am I withdrawing the mind? If Brahman is everywhere, if the Absolute is everything, whatever I think in the mind is the Absolute only. So what is it that I am withdrawing myself from? If I think of some object, it is a shape of the Absolute. It is a form taken by Brahman. So am I withdrawing the

mind from Brahman itself, while my intention is the realisation of Brahman? What is self-control?" These doubts may come to the mind of even experienced *sadhakas* or seekers.

It is true that the Absolute is everything. The Supreme Being is manifest as all these things. Even the wall that we see in front is the Absolute manifest. But, and a terrible 'but' indeed, there is some great mistake in our notion about this wall. We have again to bring to our memory the selfhood character of the Absolute. The Absolute, or Brahman, is the Atman; it is not a *vishaya*, or an object of sense. So when we look upon this wall as an object outside, it has ceased to be the Absolute, though it is true that ultimately, in its essence, it is that. The mistake is not in the substance of the object as such, or the *astitva* or existence of the object, but in the *nama* and the *rupa*, the name and the form of the object, which is the effect of the externalisation or the separation of the object from our consciousness. Name and form have to be distinguished from the existence, or pure being, of the object.

When we say there is an object outside, we make a confusion of characters. There is the object that exists as anything else also exists. This character of existence, or being, is general. I exist, you exist, this exists, that exists. But the name and the form, the shape and the contour, etc., are different. This shape of mine has risen on account of the space and time factors interfering with the being that I am. There is a ball of clay or mud, which is the substance. It takes the shape as a pot or a vessel. A vessel can be many shapes: it can be round, it can be oblong, it can be square, it

can be anything. The substance of every type of pot is the same, the clay. This is the way in which Brahman exists in everything. The clay exists in every form of the pot, but the form of the pot cannot be identified with the substance. What we call the form is a peculiar indeterminable something which is not identical with clay, and yet not different from clay. The shape of the pot is what we call the pot, not the clay itself. When I say there is a vessel or a pot, what I actually speak of is the shape which the substance has taken; it is not the substance itself that I am referring to, because that substance is elsewhere also, not only here. This particular shape is the space-time factor involved in that substance we call clay. So the entire problem is due to space-time. It is not due to the substance as such.

Thus, the interference of the so-called factors of space-time in the substance of the Absolute is the cause of the manifestation we call this vast universe. Therefore, self-control, control of the senses, mind control, yoga practice, whatever it is, is not a withdrawal of the mind from the substance of the object, which is the selfhood of things, but from the name and the form which are the external characters of the object. The selfhood of the object is the same as the selfhood of ours. That is not the problem. The problem is the externality of it. Who told us that it is out there? The space makes us feel so. There is something called space. We do not know what space is, what time is. These are only some words that we are using to describe a thing which is ultimately unintelligible.

The space-time factor is nothing but a force of externality; that is all we can say about it. We cannot say

anything more than that because it is involved in our experience. Space and time are part and parcel of our experience itself and, therefore, we cannot say anything about them. Yet, this much can be understood of them: They are expressional habits of the mind, they are the factors which pull consciousness in a particular direction called externality, and yoga practice is nothing but the subdual of the character of the mind from its movement in terms of space and time.

So the control of the mind, or withdrawal of the senses, is a very difficult task. It involves a herculean effort indeed, because it involves a very subtle understanding of what is expected to be done. There are many people who have a wrong notion of the nature of things. They think that to become a yogi or a seeker of Truth, one has to renounce things. We are always told by religions that we have to renounce things and the world in order to reach God. But we renounce the substance itself, together with the name and the form. This is a mistake arising on account of the incapacity of the mind to distinguish between the name and form, and the existence as such.

There is a humorous story. There was a small boy whose mother was very ill. She was an old lady. She was lying in bed, almost in a dying condition. Flies were sitting on her body, and one fly was sitting on her nose again and again, troubling her so much that people told the boy: "Please drive the fly away. Don't allow the fly to trouble the old lady. She is in a very bad condition." "Oh! Yes," he said. "I will drive this fly away." But the fly would not go easily like that. Again and again he tried to fan it off, but again

and again it sat on her nose. So he took a huge stick and gave a blow so forcefully that it broke the nose of the mother. The fly went off! The poor boy did not know that he was hitting his mother, and instead of driving away the fly, he broke the head and face of that poor lady.

Similarly, this sort of mistake we may commit in rejecting the world. It is not the world that we have to reject. The worldness in the object, the externality in the object, and the non-selfhood, *anatmatva*, in things have to be thrown off. Here is the crux of the whole matter. Here it is that we always become a miserable failure. When we come to this point, it is hard for us to grasp what this actually means. We think that to leave the house and to go to a forest is renunciation. But it is not, because we are still in the world only. Even in the forest, we are in the world; the world has not gone out of us. The idea that there is a world outside us is to be abrogated. Otherwise, if yoga had been so simple, everybody would have become yogis. A little closing of the eyes, a little *japa* and a little breathing will not make us a yogi. The intellect is a terrible hindrance; it will never allow us to grasp the truth of things. It always misleads us; it always takes us in the wrong direction. We then say, "I reject this, I fast, I don't sleep, I don't talk." All these techniques that we adopt in yoga do not even touch the fringe of the actual problem. They are all very necessary things, as fasting before treatment of a disease. But fasting itself is not the treatment; we have to give the proper medicament and take care of the body by positive treatment, etc. So, likewise is the case with yoga.

It is not enough if we merely practise the preliminaries of external detachment, which are important enough, no doubt. But they are preliminaries only, and not yoga proper. Yoga proper is an internal psychological technique. It is the most difficult of things to conceive because the mind thinks of an object even in the act of rejecting the object. This is the difficulty. Even when we try to remove the idea of an object from our mind, we have some object in our mind. The objectness does not leave us, just as when we love a person or thing, we think of that person; and when we hate that person also we think of him. Merely because we hate a thing, it does not mean that it has gone out of our mind. So, even renunciation may be a bondage. We may go to a worse condition, if it is not properly conceived. We should not think that hatred is the opposite of love. It is not true; it is the same as love, in a different form. So it is not so simple an affair to practise yoga. It requires a very careful analysis of what is happening inside. The problems are not outside. They are not in the world; they are not caused by people. People are not troubling us, and nobody is giving us any problem; we are our problems.

Therefore, the whole problem is in the incapacity of the mind to grasp the peculiar relationship that it has established with objects outside. Now when we say outside, it means again the peculiar concept of outsideness that has arisen in the mind. This habit of thinking in terms of non-self, *anatman*, externality, space and time has to be removed. Then the world becomes something not intended to be rejected but absorbed into our Self, because the

astitva, or the being of the world, is the Atman of the Absolute, which is the same as ours.

So here we have got a little clue to the inner significance of these two verses I quoted from the Kathopanishad, where the ultimate Purusha is supposed to be realised by an internal movement, which is not a movement towards a town or a village or city or some object. The great commentator Acharya Sankara is never tired of telling us in such contexts that movement to God does not mean movement in space; it is not actually moving in a motorcar or an airplane. It is a conscious transfiguration that is taking place inwardly. Even the word 'inward' may be misconstrued. It is a universalisation that is taking place gradually, which looks like an inwardness on account of the Atmanhood present there. This is yoga.

These are very difficult things indeed, and it is really unfortunate if we should think ourselves well placed, very happy, and that we are great seekers of yoga. We are really very far, and so we should be very careful. We are in a difficult situation; we are in a world of great complexities, diversities and misconceptions which sidetrack us every moment of time. Every thought that arises in our mind is a wrong thought. Correct thought very rarely comes to us, because we have no time to think correctly, as we are always moving in the same old groove of traditional thinking. The actual reoriented thinking is unknown to us. We have no time; we are always busy—busy in doing some nonsense, and that has engulfed us in such an intensity and to such an extent that we are immersed in it. And in that immersed

condition we are crying for God, and He does not come. So it requires ultimately the grace of God Himself.

After all this, we come to the conclusion that this terrible mess cannot be crossed over unless some miracle takes place. By some mystery of the workings of nature, as it were, divine hands begin to operate and grace descends, and we are brought in contact with a proper Guru or a teacher. That itself is a great blessing. Contact with a proper Guru is really coming in contact with God Himself. To get a Guru is as difficult as getting God. And once you get a proper teacher, then you are on the path. This is a great achievement, and again this is the work of God.

VII - THE SECRET OF SADHANA

We hear in the scriptures that when creation was complete, a war took place between the Devas and the Asuras, the celestials and the demons. The Epics and the Puranas in India are replete with stories of Devasura Sangrama, the yuddha or the war continuously taking place between the gods and the demons. The gods sometimes had an upper hand, but mostly they were defeated. In the Upanishad we are told that the gods are lesser in number than the Asuras. Also in the epic of the Mahabharata, the Pandavas were lesser in number than the Kauravas.

The evil forces are larger in quantum than the beneficent forces in the world. Acharya Sankara, while commenting on the Upanishad, tells us that it is quite obvious because the impulse towards evil, which is the urge towards contact with the objects of sense, is more powerful than the impulse towards God. Rarely people turn to God; mostly they go down to objects of sense. So the number of spiritual seekers moving towards the light of God, perhaps, can be counted on the fingers of one hand. But the downward forces rejoicing in contact with senses are plenty, and therefore their number is more. So the war went on for ages and ages.

The gods had a brainwave. They conferred among themselves. "This state of affairs cannot be for a long time. We must find out a means of overcoming the Asuras. We shall chant the holy Udgitha Saman, which is a Veda mantra, and some of us will be engaged in doing this work of holy recitation to quell the Asuras." So the deities, who were all implanted in the sense organs such as the eyes,

ears, etc., and even the mind, were all requested to undertake this discipline of chanting the Udgitha. The deity of the speech was told: "You chant the Udgitha for us, and with the power of this great force, we shall overcome the Asura forces."

The Asuras got wind of it. They knew that a great spiritual discipline was being undertaken by the Devas so that they may overcome the Asuras. So the Asuras thought, "We shall not allow this to happen. We shall not permit this spiritual discipline to go on. We shall attack it." When speech was chanting the holy mantra, the Udgitha, Asuras came and attacked, and speech was quelled and thrown down. The Upanishad says that this is the reason why often speech that is uttered by people is not beneficent, not worthy, not delicate, but is harsh, barbaric, cruel, cutting and insulting to others. This detrimental negative attitude adopted by speech often is the effect of the evil influence imprecated upon it by the Asura forces. So the deity of speech was defeated.

Then the gods told the deity of the nose, "You chant the mantra; speech is defeated." So the deity of the nose started chanting the holy mantra, and the Asuras understood this. They came with a force and attacked this deity of the nose. That is why it is said that we can also smell bad odour, and not only fragrance. So sometimes we close our nose when certain odours enter our nostrils. The nose was defeated.

The angels told the other sense organs, one by one, to chant the mantra, and all had the same fate. They were all overcome. The Upanishad tells us that every sense organ has, therefore, a double activity. It can do good and it can

do bad; it can receive what is good and it can receive what is bad. We can hear nice things and we can hear bad things also. The mind also was defeated. The mind was inflicted with the evil by the Asuras when it chanted the mantra. So it can think right and it can think wrong. Thus, there was no way out. The gods were defeated repeatedly. They were utterly helpless.

When they were all thus defeated, they joined together and considered as to what could be done under the circumstances. They thought that they had made a mistake in choosing their agents for chanting the Udgitha. So they asked the vital force, the Prana Sakti, which is prior to the operation of the senses, which impels the senses to act—as the sun impels all activity in the world, himself not doing anything. They said: "O Prana, chant the Udgitha for us." And the Prana, the unifying force, the vital energy, chanted the Udgitha. And when the Prana started the chant, the Asuras came in a large battalion to attack it. What happened? They were thrown back. As a mud ball thrown against a hard rock breaks into pieces and becomes dispersed in all directions, the Asuras were thrown and cast in various directions, powerless by the force of the Udgitha chant conducted by the vital force, Prana Sakti—a thing which the senses could not undertake, and could not succeed in doing. Then the Devas won victory over the demons. They assumed their original positions of angels, which had been occupied by the Asuras, the demons. Now, inasmuch as the Asuras were quelled and overthrown completely in this battle with the force of a chant conducted by the vital force, the gods regained their original positions.

The lost kingdom was regained. "One who knows this secret also regains one's own position," says the Upanishad.

Here is a very mystical anecdote given to us in the sacred text, the Upanishad, which is very precise and goes to the point. The meditational process, or spiritual discipline, is described here in the form of a story. The angels fall and lose their positions due to the evil influence of the Asuras. And in order to regain their lost positions, they have to take recourse to the vital force, and not to the sense organs. The sense organs are not our friends in the practice of spirituality. They succeed in making an attempt only, but really they do not succeed in the end.

Now what does all this mean to us? It means everything to us. The gods, the angels, the celestials are the denizens of the Garden of Eden. They are bosom friends of God, limbs of the Almighty, scintillating sparks of the Divine Conflagration, inseparable from the Supreme Being. That is the angelic condition. There, in that condition, the consciousness of the angel is a perpetual awareness of its relation to the Almighty. The angels never lose consciousness of God. Whether it is Deva, or Michael, or Gabriel, or any other angel mentioned in the scriptures, whatever be the name given to these angels, they are perpetually in the presence of God. They are the guardians of heaven; they are parts of the Divine Kingdom.

There is eternal daylight there, says the Upanishad. "*Sakrit vibhato hi brahmalokah*." In Brahmaloka, which is the Indian counterpart of the Garden of Eden in the Bible, there is eternal day— no night there. It is all blazing

radiance. This blazing radiance does not come from some object hanging in the skies, as it is the case here in this world. The radiance of Brahmaloka is not the effect of a light coming from some lamp, not even a lamp like the sun or the moon. It is self-radiance. It is the light emanating from everything that is there. It is light shining upon its own self, and not shining on some other object which cannot shine. This is the Kingdom of God, this is the Garden of Eden, this is Brahmaloka, this is the world of the angels, the gods, the celestials.

The angels fell. What is this falling? The Upanishad's answer is that the fall took place due to the Asura influence, which is a difficult thing for us to understand. The problem of evil is an indescribable problem for everyone. Philosophically conceived, the Asura is the impulse towards sense objects. The desire for anything other than one's own self is the Asura, or the demon. This is something very interesting. We can know where we stand by the measure of this yardstick. One who desires anything other than one's own Self is the Asura. The angels have no such desires. They are self-satisfied, self-contained, self-complete, radiant sparks of divinity. Something happens! Nobody knows the mystery of creation. This mystery, this so-called something seems to have occurred, whether it was the cause of the fall of Lucifer or the cause of the fall of anybody else. Something happened. This mystery diverted the attention of the angels in a direction which is contrary to the original angelic vision. So we do not think like angels. We think like men and women, like human beings. What is the difference

between the vision of the celestials and the vision of the mortals like us?

The Upanishads have many things to tell us in regard about this interesting feature in the process of creation. An explanation of the significance behind this anecdote can be found in the Aitareya Upanishad, wherein the description of the descent is characteristically described. When the angel, the celestial or the god becomes the mortal, the subject becomes the object and the object becomes the subject. This is what has happened. In the beginning of the creation process, the universe remains as an inseparable body of the Almighty. Since God revealed Himself as this creation, all things in creation are inseparable from God's Being; and since God cannot be regarded as an object, nothing in this world can be regarded as an object. Since the world is the body of God, it is an appearance of the glory of the Almighty Himself.

But, for every one of us, the world is an object of sense, as if God Himself has become a sense object. We are running after things which were originally inseparable from us but which have now assumed the context or the position of the things which are external to us. The origins of our own present individualities, the causes of our present form of existence have erroneously assumed the position of an object of sense outside. The world is an object of sense for every one of us. And we have assumed a false position of subjectivity or the position of a seer or experiencer, while we are the experienced objects from the angelic or the cosmic point of view. The so-called subjectivity in us is an objectivity to God, and to assume that we are subjects is to

assume what Lucifer assumed in the presence of the Almighty. Now what position we are all occupying in this world will be clear to every one of us.

The senses were asked to chant the holy mantra. We also chant the mantra every day. We employ our sense organs in the practice of spiritual *sadhana*. The chanting of the Udgitha is nothing but the invocation of God, the Almighty, for the purpose of overcoming this evil influence by which we have somehow or other become entangled in attraction to objects, the evil influence inflicted upon us by the Asuras. But the senses are not reliable instruments for spiritual practice. The ears, the nose, the senses of seeing, touching, tasting, etc., are not our friends. And, therefore, to ask them to chant the spiritual mantra would be to court defeat in this battle. This has actually happened.

The cosmical envisagement is impossible for the sense organs. The very idea of contemplation in yoga or meditation on the Divine Principle is a non-sensory or a super-sensory aspiration arising from us. Spiritual aspiration is a super-sensory impulse. It is not a sensory impulse. It has very little to do with the sense organs. What we call *pratyahara*, the well-known word, is the accumulation within ourselves of a force which overcomes the distracting influences of the senses—the production of a cumulative energy within ourselves which precedes the distracting movements of the senses. This is actually what is meant by the Prana which sang the Udgitha and won victory.

There is something in us that is different from, superior to, and transcending the sensory diversifications.

We cannot see God with the eyes, cannot hear Him with the ears, touch Him with the fingers, taste Him with the tongue, or smell Him with the nose. That which is transcendent is not an object of these senses. That means to say that the recourse to spiritual practice is not a sensory activity. It is not anything that is done by the eyes or the ears, the fingers, the nose or the tongue. So the chanting of the holy text, the Udgitha, which is an invocation of the glory of God, cannot be undertaken except by that which is divine in us. And the senses are the undivine henchmen which force us to go contrary to the righteousness of the Kingdom of God.

So all the senses were defeated. The gods had to take recourse to that which is superior to all the senses, viz., the Prana, which has a variegated meaning. We do *pranayama*, control the breath, by withholding inspiration and expiration, and we speak of the restraint of the *prana*. We are also told that there are various functions of the *prana*—*prana*, *apana*, *vyana*, *samana*, *udana*, etc. Actually *prana* is the vitality in the whole human organism. It is not located in any particular sense organ, but the sense organs move on account of this dynamo that is working inside. This dynamo is the power generator, and the energy can be utilised for any purpose—to move a train, light a bulb, power a refrigerator or heat a stove. We can do anything we like, but the generator is not concerned with that. Likewise is the Prana Sakti. We can use it for seeing with the eyes or hearing with the ears, smelling with the nose, tasting with the tongue, etc., but it has no concern with all these, even as electricity has no concern with light and movement, etc.

So there is a super-sensory integrating vitality in us, which was the thing that finally succeeded in chanting the holy invocation and quelled the Asuras. How could it be done? Because the integrating force is the only power that can put down the distracting force. The impulse of the senses in terms of or in relation to objects is the evil spoken of as the Asuras here in this battle. This sensory impulse cannot be overcome by employing the senses themselves. It would be like employing a thief as a policeman to catch the thief. He will not succeed in that, because he is a friend of the thief. Therefore, the senses are not good instruments in the practice of yoga. They have to be withdrawn in *pratyahara*, and this is done by various ways, as we all know. So the Udgitha, the divine invocation, was the recital by that integrating vitality which sung the chant; and the concentration of this force, which is the total energy of the system, melted the impulses of the senses, and there was a retention of the activity of the senses. A true *pranayama-kumbhaka* took place, in yogic parlance. The senses ceased from operating in their own ways.

The Asura spoken of is not a human being or something like a human being, but it is a power. Finally, everything in this universe, in all this creation, is a force moving in this direction or that direction. The Deva, the angel, the god, the celestial, the power divine is the impulse towards cosmic integration, divine experience. The Asura, the demon, the Rakshasa, the evil that is spoken of is the counter-energy that rushes towards the periphery of creation, away from the centre, to the farthest gross form of objects of sense; it recognises a drop of honey there and

licks it, like a dog licking a broken bone. The spiritual practice of yoga is the union of the powers of the senses together and the centralising of this force in the great vitality in us, which is indescribable, finally. This energy, or Sakti, is in every one of us. This Sakti is not a physical power merely; the physical power of ours is only an expression of this internal Prana Sakti. The Udgitha mantra was chanted thus by the Prana, and the Asuras were quelled, and the gods assumed their original positions.

What is the meaning of gods assuming their original positions? It means that the gods went to heaven. Otherwise, they were banished as exiles and they were wandering anywhere, helplessly. When the Asuras were defeated in battle, the angels got back their original positions. The angel is a limb of the Virat who visualises everything as a subject rather than an object. There is no object for the Virat, or the Supreme Universal Consciousness; and we were all parts of it. We are all parts of it even now, but we are blindfolded and afflicted with some kind of evil, as the Upanishad mentioned already, and so we have lost our positions. We have been thrown out as exiles from this relation that we had with the Cosmic Virat or the Hiranyagarbha. The origin that we aspire for, the position that we have to regain, is that position in the limb of the Almighty.

Everything was visible in that Cosmic Form described in the Mahabharata, particularly in the Bhagavadgita. Everything is found there. Even the one who sees it is there, already included. The seer of the Virat is also inside the Virat. That means to say that there is nothing outside it. So

the so-called outsideness and the running after the things that are outside is something totally undivine. And the practice of yoga, the living of the spiritual life, is the chanting of the Udgitha. It is the Divine Name for all practical purposes. It means the invocation of the Divine Principle in our practical lives, implanting God in our hearts and seeking the blessing of the Almighty.

This is a hard job, because when we visualise the Divine Being, or when we invoke the divine into us, the senses persist in their action; the Asuras attack us, as the Upanishad tells us again and again, and we do not succeed in our attempts. Because there is always a tendency in us to objectify everything, we cannot think in terms of the angel's vision; that is out of question. But we have to succeed in doing it. Otherwise, there is no entry into this Divine Kingdom. "A flaming sword is placed at the gate, and an angel guards it that no mortal may enter." It means to say, no sensory appetite may be permitted there. Not only appetite, even an activity of a sensory type will not hold water. "Straight is the gate, narrow is the way." The gross objects of sense cannot enter that narrow gate. It is so narrow that even this body cannot go. We cannot carry this body there; we have to shed it.

The angels have no physical body. The angel is an ethereal existence, which can penetrate through walls and pierce through everything. It is not physicality; it is rarified angelity. That is the Spirit within us. The angel is still speaking within us; it is not dead. The Spirit within us is the angel. But the whisper which compels us to divert the attention of this angel to the body and all its external

relations is the Asura, the Satan speaking. The voice of the divine is the voice of pure divine subjectivity in affiliation with God's omnipresence; but this is not the way in which we are working in the world. We have a different way altogether. We are not in the Kingdom of God; we are in a mortal world of birth and death. The process known as transmigration is consequent upon this divine impulse, stifled by the urge for sensory contact, struggling to regain its original position but getting defeated again and again. Birth and death are processes of the struggle of the spirit to regain its original position. But in every attempt, it gets defeated. And so it is born and it dies, it is born and it dies, and there is no end to it. So the gods fight and get defeated, fight and get defeated again and again, because they have not employed the proper means in the battle with the Asuras.

After ages of struggle, we awaken ourselves to the proper means. We have to know the tactics of the enemy in order to meet the inimical forces. Already we have been told that the angels are lesser in number and the evil forces are more, and they can threaten us. The quantity of the world always surprises us. And the quality of our Spirit seems to be a little spark before this mighty magnitude of the physical world. We are awe-stricken even by looking at this world. We do not know whether we can do anything here at all. Such a mighty giant is this world before us. So the quantity engulfs the quality; the Asuras overpower the gods. But, the gods have their own strength; quality is superior to quantity, as we all know. Yet, we are frightened by the quantity of things because of the incapacity of this

little quality of the spark to assert its pure independence in its primitive originality.

This is the meaning behind the Upanishadic story of the Devasura Sangrama, very interestingly told us, though not in much detail. But it becomes a large epic like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and the Puranic stories later on, all meaning finally the agelong struggle between the divine and the undivine forces. It is a conflict between Spirit and matter, Light and darkness, the Subject and the object, the Seer and the seen, the 'I' and the 'you', and so on. For this purpose, we have to conduct a very incisive analysis of our position and engage ourselves in the very same discipline which was contemplated by the gods in heaven after receiving several kicks and blows and getting defeated. We have been defeated many a time. We have passed through many, many forms of earthly existence. We are told that we have passed through 84 lakhs of species of living beings, etc.; and now we have come to the end of it, as it were, by assuming human form.

It is not really the end, but it is the end in the sense that we have a consciousness of the future or the destiny of ours. So the purpose in existence has awakened itself in man, while in the earlier species this consciousness of the purpose is supposed to be completely obliterated in sleep and there is only a kind of instinctive action without the consciousness of a higher purpose or a destiny in life. But even though man's existence is not the finale in creation, in a way it is a great achievement indeed. It is a kind of pass mark that we have obtained in an examination, but it is not complete. A pass mark is not an entire success. It is only a

patting on the back that we are well, and it is good. But there is a lot to be done further, above the human level, to reach that original position which we have lost.

We have to traverse a long distance, but we have the consolation that we know how much time it will take, what are the means that we have to employ, where is the destination, etc. Even to have this consciousness of purpose is an achievement, though this is a meager achievement because, though we have a consciousness of the purpose of our existence and the nature of the destiny ahead, it has not yet been realised and achieved. So while we are aware of the fact, we have not yet come to possession of this fact. This effort towards the coming into direct contact and realisation of the great purpose of existence, and to regain our original position as angels, is the art of yoga.